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## The Frustration of Medicine

By Professor V. H. MOTTRAM

*Professor Mottram, who holds the Chair of Physiology in the University of London, has written a number of books on health, hygiene and dietetics*

ONE of the most pressing problems of all civilised countries is how to produce satisfactory children and from satisfactory children satisfactory adults. In the broadest sense of the term this is a medical problem. It involves preventive medicine—prevention of maternal mortality, satisfactory nutrition of the mother and the child pre-natally and post-natally, prevention of the crippling diseases of childhood, and attention to the special needs of children during adolescence. Others may say that in addition we need a knowledge of genetics and psychology. But putting the whole matter on a purely physical basis it will be granted that we make a pretty bad mess of the solution of the problem. Recently it was stated that in the North of England 68 per cent. of the recruits for the army had to be rejected for physical unfitness. This is scarcely a successful solution. At the other end of the social scale the results are not much better. The boys of the public school class have mostly had to have their tonsils removed and very few have a perfect set of teeth. A high percentage of the children of the well-to-do are forced to wear spectacles. Faulty nutrition may easily prove to be the main cause of maternal mortality, defective eyes and teeth, and poor resistance of the body to infection.

It will hardly be believed, but it is the truth, that we do not yet know what is the optimum intake of calories

for children of different ages, particularly for children at the more 'difficult' times of life, *i.e.*, around three years of age and at puberty. We do not know the minimum need for, or the optimum supply of, first-class protein at any age. We are still quarrelling about the influence of vitamins A and D upon infection of the body and upon the bones and teeth. As regards the minimum and optimum requirements of the various mineral constituents of the food we know next to nothing. Except on broad principles we do not know how best to feed a pregnant woman. On all these subjects we have no satisfactory quantitative data—and science is fundamentally quantitative. Nor, so far as the writer's knowledge goes, is there any concerted plan for the investigation of these problems before either the medical profession, the Medical Research Council, or the Physiological Society. The investigation of these problems would cost much more money than there is available from the Treasury, though the saving to the nation, were these problems solved, in suffering and expense would be incalculable. Corry Mann's work on the nutritional value of milk, carried out under the auspices of the Medical Research Council and the Ministry of Health, has proved invaluable in ministering to the health of the children of the country, and cost but some few thousand pounds per year for the years it took. And the rough edges left in the investigation of that problem would cost a few more thousands to round off. In the lack of the fertilising power of money you can expect but poor crops in medical research.

But even supposing that there were money for research in medicine, and that impeccable solutions of medical problems were discovered and presented to the public, would they be utilised? The answer undoubtedly is: not for many years to come. To give a concrete example: the use of insulin in the treatment of diabetes. Insulin was introduced into the treatment of diabetes over ten years ago, yet the Medical Research Council recently complained that outside the hospitals, where its value had been abundantly proved, the deaths from diabetes had shown but very little decrease—a fact seized upon with joy by the anti-vivisectionists. The general practitioner has neither the time nor the scientific background to understand the factors at work in producing diabetes, nor the relation of insulin to diet and intercurrent disease. A cynical remark about the teaching of medicine, that it takes ten years to get a fact or theory into a text-book and the rest of time to get it out, is almost justified, and it is worth our while to consider why this lag in time between the discovery and its general application comes about. It is to be found in the method of recruitment of medical men, in their education, and in the lack of time they have in practice to keep abreast of modern research.

### The Closed Door

In the first place it is not too much to say that no poor person, no one without well-to-do relatives to back him, can easily enter the medical profession. A career is not open to talent unless there is financial backing. Between five and six years' training is essential before a man can take a degree in medicine, and even then he is unfitted to go out into general practice. True, there are scholarships in science to the universities, particularly the older universities, which will carry a clever student through the academic years of his training, and medical schools give scholarships to a clever student of biology, anatomy, and physiology which will carry him through the years of hospital training; but these scholarships are far too few in number. Then at the end of his training he is stranded, for he has either to purchase a practice or squat in some neighbourhood and wait for a practice to grow—a heart-breaking process if he has no private means. On the other hand, the well-to-do with moderate ability only finds his way to a practice made simple. If his father is a physician so much the better. He is pushed, pulled, or crammed through the necessary examinations and steps into his father's shoes when the time comes. Many a man enters medicine because his father has a good practice and from no inherent enthusiasm for the healing art.

### Inefficient Academic Training

Second, it may with certainty be said that the academic part of the medical student's training is hopelessly inefficient. While it may be admitted that medicine is still an art and not a science, it is fairly clear that to understand and apply the modern discoveries of medical research a medical man must have a severe training in scientific method. He must develop a critical and scientific outlook. This his academic years in biology, chemistry, physics, physiology, and anatomy are supposed to give him. We may confidently assert that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he sloughs his scientific training when he enters the wards. In fact he is often advised to forget all the physiology which he has learnt. Possibly this advice is wise, for it is to be doubted if it is of the slightest use to him. The fact is that in trying to study biology, chemistry, physics, physiology, and anatomy in two-and-a-half to three years he gets but a smattering of these subjects, and of their serious import nothing. He acquires but the bare bones of these subjects, and of their living spirit not a jot. It is only by a deep critical study of a subject that a man can begin to discover the spirit of scientific work. When he has finished his academic work scarcely a man is equipped to read an original article in the sciences he has studied (or shall we say 'learnt?') and

give a judgment upon it. Nor is he fitted to do any original work.

Only when the medical student is at last in the wards of a hospital does he come into contact with anything which seems even remotely connected with his life's work. He learns to percuss the chest, to listen to heart sounds and breath sounds, to test reflexes, and to use the ophthalmoscope and laryngoscope (much of which he might have learnt at the hands of the physiologist, but usually does not learn), to take case reports, to perform minor surgical operations, to conduct a specific number of parturitions single-handed, to test abnormal secretions, and a hundred and one other things which certainly he will have to do in practice.

On the other hand, he will not obtain a general oversight of the problems of health and disease as he will meet them in practice. He will obtain a distorted view of the prevalence of venereal diseases. He will learn next to nothing of psychology, of sex, or of diet, three subjects of the utmost importance in private practice. And if the physicians who train him are interested, as they are bound to be, in the rare diseases, he may obtain an altogether wrong impression of their importance in medicine. He will go out into practice to find that half his cases suffer for psychological reasons, from faulty sex adjustments and faulty diet, and that a large proportion of the ills of the rest of them are due to minor infections of the respiratory tracts.

Third, so soon as a practice becomes at all profitable, the physician is so 'run off his legs' that he has no time to keep abreast of modern research in medicine. Who has not smiled to see stacks of *The Lancet* and the *British Medical Journal* on his doctor's consulting-room table, with not even the wrappers removed? And if he has no time to study the journals, how can he get away to the necessary post-graduate work to keep him up-to-date? A keen physician near a large town may be able to get to post-graduate lectures once a week and so strive to keep abreast of things, but nothing short of a sabbatical year spent in post-graduate medicine will achieve the requisite result. At long last we are to have a post-graduate medical teaching centre in our greatest city, though, under our present haphazard social system, the students will be medical officers of health whose local authorities have the wisdom to subsidise them, keen private practitioners with private means, and budding consultants. Of course, the establishment of such a school of post-graduate medicine is to be hailed with delight, and that its halls will be filled is all to the good. But it is often just the medical man who can afford least to desert his practice for a time who could best benefit by post-graduate work.

### Fads and Fashions in Medicine

In no real science would fads and fashions comparable with those which beset medicine be possible, or would nostrums such as the majority of patent medicines and patent foods hold the field as they do in medicine. To give an example: in the boyhood of the writer the Russian bacteriologist Metchnikoff, in an exciting and stimulating book called *The Nature of Man*, started a fine hare, viz., that we are all being poisoned by our large intestines. This theory he based on the facts (i) that animals with short large intestines (e.g., birds such as parrots) live to great old age, whereas animals with longer large intestines are short-lived, and (ii) that poisonous substances are produced by the normal putrefactive microbes of the large intestine working upon proteins and amino acids. Further, where the putrefactive microbes were replaced by acid-producing microbes, such as *Bacillus bulgaricus*, these poisons were no longer manufactured. Therefore people who live on milk soured by such bacilli ought to live to great old age. It was, he said, notorious that old age was endemic among Bulgarians.

From this arose two fashions in medicine, (i) the treatment of all vague symptoms said to be due to 'intestinal

(Continued on page 327)

# Russian Architecture

By ROBERT BYRON

TO visit the chief towns of western Russia, such as Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev, is to receive a very definite architectural impression. It is not a question, at first, of whether the architecture is good or bad, beautiful or ugly. The newly-arrived visitor is impressed primarily with the fact that it is different. Furthermore, he will observe that whatever the style or date of the building he happens to be looking at, be it a Byzantine cathedral or a neo-Slav town-hall, there emerges a remarkable consistency of æsthetic purpose, which transcends the contemporary grammar of ornament and design and must derive, inevitably, from certain idiosyncrasies of the national taste. Those idiosyncrasies comprise a love of scale commensurate with the endless plains and huge rivers on which the towns stand, a preference for bold uninhibited design executed with a blind and sometimes crazy

form as possible the main elements of Russian architecture and the means, more concrete than psychological, by which they were arrived at. I cannot do more than say that if I had had this book before I went to Russia, my own study of the



Cathedral of S. Sophia, Novgorod, Byzantine style (11th century)

disregard for normal restrictions, and a feeling for glitter, colour, and rich ornament which, though always exuberant and often riotous, yet invariably succeeds in stopping short before it grows vulgar and allusive. The result is fantasy. But it is fantasy under control. How this control is exercised, by what instinct or accident it avoids the clotted oppression of Nuremberg or the whimsy amusingness of a ballet-setting, that is the mystery which the visitor must solve. It is worth solving. For apart from the measure of failure or success which has attended their efforts, the visitor realises that he is among a people who care for architecture and are conscious of it.

Mr. David Roden Buxton, in his beautifully illustrated book, *Russian Mediæval Architecture*\*, avoids this major issue—though that he is not altogether unconscious of it appears from his discussion of the differing opinions that have been uttered from time to time on the subject of that most fantastic of all Russian buildings, the church of Basil Blajenny in the Red Square at Moscow. This is not to say, however, that Mr. Buxton's is a negligible book. On the contrary, it is a work of considerable importance, being the first study of its kind to appear in our language. If its scope excludes the larger æsthetic question, it is because the author is concerned with a purpose not less valuable, which is to place before the reader in as simple a



The Granovitaya Palace in the Kremlin, built by the Italians Ruffo and Solario (15th century)

buildings there, though still hurried and superficial, would have revealed to me a great deal more than, in fact, it did.

To anyone with a rudimentary knowledge of European architecture in general, it is obvious that from the eleventh



The Kremlin in Moscow, largely built by Italians (15th century)

Photographs by the Author

century, when building in Russia began, until the present day, the Russians have been accustomed to borrow their styles, and sometimes their architects, from abroad. They began with the Byzantine. In the fifteenth century came Italians of the Renaissance. Italian influence persisted sporadically until the

eighteenth century, when it once more became paramount and swept the country with a fever of baroque. From the same source came the Russian Empire style of the early nineteenth century, though its last and grandest impetus was due to the Frenchman Montferrand. At the end of the century Russia was infected with the revivalism prevalent all over Europe. *Art nouveau* preceded the War. And when the War had finished, the Revolution was quick to adopt the packing-case modes of the most advanced functionalists, as suited

to the austere spirit of Materialism. In view of this perpetual inspiration from abroad, it may seem somewhat surprising that such a thing as a specifically Russian architecture should exist at all. It is surprising. But the fact remains that it does exist. The foreign styles were transformed to suit the Russian taste. The foreign architects became infected with Russian ideas of scale, ornament and fantasy. The Admiralty in Leningrad is an Empire building a quarter of a mile in length, surmounted in its midst with a terrific gilt spike on which balances a ship in full sail. And no one who has seen it can fail to realise that not even the most rigid architectural conventions ever invented by classical Europe could prevail over the spirit which created, through the medium of immigrant Italians, that unearthly flight of architectural imagination, the Kremlin of Moscow.

Nevertheless, during this long process of borrowing, there intervened one period when a truly national style developed, and promised, for a brief space, to predominate over all foreign importations. This was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and it is to the understanding of this development that Mr. Buxton contributes perhaps his most interesting chapter. 'A new influence', he says on page 33, 'began to be felt in the



The Churches of Yaroslavl, the 'middle period' of national architecture (17th century)

early sixteenth century, and made at last of Russian architecture something really national, showing but little trace of its Byzantine origin. This influence came from the wooden architecture of the north, a truly native style of building unconnected, as far as is known, with anything outside Russia'. This, then, is the explanation of those strange conical churches, those aerial bulbosities, and that increasing preponderance of height over the other dimensions, which give Russian ecclesiastical buildings of the middle

period so spectacular a character. One has only to glance at Mr. Buxton's illustrations, at the church of Kizhi, for example, on Plate 76, to realise the truth of his argument and to find reason in a style which, without these precedents in a different material, must remain permanently inexplicable.

But art in Russia, like everything else, has always been subject to arbitrary pronouncements on the part of uninformed authority. Just as the national school of painting that Roublev might have founded had withered in the frost of ecclesiastical anathema against all innovations, so now the national architecture was likewise doomed. 'In the middle of the seventeenth [century], just when the national style was showing its greatest originality and fertility, Nikon, the Russian Patriarch, forbade the use of conical towers, and other attractive innovations of the time, as contrary to Church tradition. . . . The ecclesiastical edict of 1650 is largely responsible for the monotonous omnipresence of the five-domed church, a uniformity one is apt wrongly to attribute to lack of initiative on the part of the Russian builders'. Thus the beginnings of a true Russian style were quashed and the contemporary forms of Western Europe became the basis of all future enterprise.



Baroque church at Sergievo (18th century)



Portico of the Moscow Opera House (late Empire)

Photographs by the Author

Technically speaking, as Mr. Buxton points out, Russian building is generally of poor quality, employing unsubstantial materials and relying, only too often, on foundations whose inadequacy produces strange deviations from the perpendicular. The detail inclines to be coarse; its workmanship is unskilled, at least by our standards; and its placing is frequently erratic to the point of eccentricity. Nor can I recall a single instance of

general design which can qualify for a place among the world's masterpieces. The lyrical perfection of our Gothic cathedrals and classical palaces, the unspoken secrets of ratio and proportion, the emphasis on the cubic mass, lightened here, strengthened there, to obtain an effect of muscular symmetry—these fastidious canons are foreign to the Russian taste. And similarly foreign is the ideal of Islamic building, the emphasis on surfaces exquisitely patterned, on the delicate shell surrounding an imagined space. Yet Russian architecture has a virtue of its own, which disdains these comparisons and refuses to be judged by alien standards. It may not rank with the greatest architecture. But it has produced, none the less, some of the

most beautiful architectural effects that the world can boast. To catch a first sight of the Kremlin across the Moscow river, to come suddenly upon the Uritsky Square at Leningrad, are experiences which remind one that it is a privilege to be alive and a sentient human being.

To give the Russian style of building a label (which is always convenient because it sticks in the memory and comes to one's help in moments of bewilderment), it may be called essentially a *scenic* style. It is not so much the architectural unit, the individual, self-contained building, which counts, as the architectural landscape, the panoramic effect. The genius of this method of architectural expression lies in grouping. And though, in this country, the romantic outline of Windsor Castle, consciously elaborated by Wyatt, provides a happy instance of such genius, it is almost impossible for those who

have not visited Russia to conceive the scope which her people's innate sureness of æsthetic instinct has discovered in the ordering of towers and domes, of pillars and pediments, and in the application of gay colour to reinforce the process and relieve the monotony of dark forest and unbroken plain. Such architecture must not be examined too closely or with too great an adherence to academic precepts. One must be

content, simply, with the vision that presents itself. When that pleases, the Russian architect has attained his object. He invites enjoyment rather than study. His appeal is not to the mind, but to the eye alone. And in that spirit he must be approached.

A genius so unique and consistent as Russian building has displayed from the eleventh century onward was not to be smothered by a single Revolution. Even in its adoption of the packing-case style, the scenic instinct was still alive, as may be seen in the unfinished circle of skyscrapers at Harkov. But functionalism precluded colour. And not only does the Russian love colour, but in his native quarries of granites and labradors he possesses a means of gratifying it which no country in



Church of the Transfiguration, Kizhi—the most elaborate and arresting creation of North-Russian wooden architecture (early 18th century)

Reproduced from 'Russian Medieval Architecture', by David Roden Buxton (Cambridge University Press)\*

Europe can rival. Two years ago, when I was in Moscow, the leading architects of the state assured me that functionalism had been tried and found wanting. Colour is needed, they said, if the new buildings are to combine harmoniously with their predecessors. We were talking, at the time, of the immense People's Palace which is to be erected in Moscow on the same side of the river as the Kremlin. The design for this building has now been published, and it is just such a design as might have been expected from a study of Russian architecture in the past—enormous, fantastic, and intrinsically scenic in character, 1,362 feet in height, of which one fifth will be occupied by a chromium-plated statue of Lenin. A skyscraper, borrowed indiscriminately from America, chromium-plate borrowed indiscriminately from some bathroom in a casual advertisement! Anything less functional could hardly be imagined.

\*The photograph on our front cover has also been taken from this book



An 'art nouveau' railway station at Moscow

The native instinct is reasserting itself. The new Palace may not turn out one of the world's masterpieces. But I dare to predict that it will provide both a fit companion to its neighbour, the fifteenth-century Kremlin, and an indubitable product of the contemporary æsthetic. This, if I am right, will constitute an achievement of which no people other than the Russians would be capable in this timid age.



'Packing-case' architecture in Moscow: flats for Government officials

*Photographs by the Author*

From a photograph of the model it is difficult to assess the detail. But it can at least be said that the main portico will have an unexpectedly traditional character. An article recently published in the *New Statesman* by Miss Beatrice King, on her return from the U.S.S.R., also stresses the gradual emergence of Russian architecture from the trammels of political ideology which is taking place at the present time.



Model for the Palace of the Soviets in Moscow, 1,362 feet high, with a chromium-plated statue of Lenin on top, as it will be seen from the Kremlin side

*Planet News*

# Revealing Accents

By LORD PONSONBY

*Lord Ponsonby contends that the accent that a man is born to is the one that suits him best; if he endeavours to 'improve' it he will only become a 'mincer'*

HERE is a great deal of talk just now about pronunciation and accents. I am no authority whatever on pronunciation, but I am not going to try and correct the mispronunciations which I have always made. I know I ought not to say 'yellow', but I cannot begin at my age to say 'yellow' when I have said 'yellow' all my life. But accents are quite different, and I sincerely hope they will go on and that our speech will not become standardised into dull uniformity in a general endeavour to be what is supposed to be correct and refined.

Previous to the present Parliament you could hear a greater variety of accents in the House of Commons than anywhere else in the country and this gave, as nothing else could, a vivid impression of its representative character. Members had come from all parts of the United Kingdom and their voices and accents confirmed this fact. I once remarked on the Scottish accent, which I admire; but I was asked *which* Scottish accent I meant. There seem to be at least six. It is true I can recognise Glasgow, but the shades of difference between the others I am afraid I do not know how to distinguish. Some people think the Glasgow accent ugly. I disagree. I remember a Lord Advocate with the strongest possible Glasgow accent. I should hardly have listened to his speeches had it not been that I was fascinated by the snap and snarl of his diction. But what I may refer to generally as a Scottish accent is an enormous advantage to a speaker. The rolling *r*, the long vowel and the occasional un-English word give a bite and at the same time a distinction which arrests attention even in conversation. The same may be said of the Irish accent, although in quite a different way. The Irish members in former Parliaments owed a great deal of the attention they got to the manner of their speech quite apart from the matter. A bit of a brogue is a great advantage. I could give many instances. The sing-song lilt of Wales, where the orators come from, is best, I am told, when they are speaking their own language, but nevertheless in English it has a very pleasant effect.

A Cockney accent is generally condemned. Again I disagree. It is true that a Cockney accent is purer and better in a coster than in a Member of Parliament. This only shows that it is best when it is rich. It should be undiluted and not softened in an attempt to conform to some *other* standard of pronunciation. In England there is an immense variety of accents. If I were to pick out my two favourites I should find them at opposite ends of the country, Northumberland and Devonshire. There is a bite in the one with its guttural *r* and a softness in the other with its modulated *u* which is very attractive. I like Yorkshire. It always amuses me and gives a great deal of point to a funny story. I prefer it to Lancashire, although I admit there is a certain virility in the harshness of a Lancashire voice. Sussex, when you get it pure, is delightful, but unfortunately Sussex, like the Home Counties, is becoming infected by the spread not of real Cockney but of suburban emasculated Cockney. You will only find pure Sussex in remote villages. Wiltshire, being further off, still retains in many of its villages the purity of its native tongue, and very pleasant it is. In addition to accent many special words may be found connected with the English counties, and it will be a great pity if they all die out. I cannot think of one pure county accent which I dislike. These dialects have grown up with the people for generations and are as characteristic as some of their habits and fashions and forms of architecture. Surely there is nothing against a man because he speaks with some strong accent or other. On the contrary, it seems to me an advantage. Moreover, I like to be told at once in this way where a man comes from.

But I will go further than this appreciation of provincial accents, even so far as to say that for a speaker some impediments of speech are advantageous. A slight stammer undoubtedly is, especially when it comes just before an important word. A lisp, a hiss, a hesitation, a raucous note, a wheeze, even an individual drawl, are all personal characteristics which are by no means drawbacks. On the contrary, they attract.

Of the English language as spoken outside the British Isles I will say nothing, as I do not want to be rude. But I have no objection at all to a foreign accent. A foreign language differs from ours as much in intonation as in accent. A foreigner may cultivate an excellent English accent but seldom can he abandon the intonation of his native language. Very few of my fellow-countrymen, however perfect their knowledge—say of French—may be, can in conversation be taken for Frenchmen. They will drop their voices at the end of a sentence where a Frenchman will raise his.

So you see on the whole I am greatly in favour of accents, dialects and personal peculiarities of speech. But I make one exception and that one very strongly. It is the accent which is cultivated or copied and is not natural. This generally means mincing, which is the most objectionable form of speech that exists. Whether it be a Scot who is trying to mitigate a natural accent in order to conform to what he believes is a more refined form of speech, or whether it be a Cockney who drops the curiously effective tone which he uses with his friends, in order to appear more cultivated, the man who abandons his natural speech for something else never quite succeeds, and he produces a foolish affected spurious tone and sure enough sooner or later he will begin to mince. Mincers are trying to raise themselves to some imagined higher level; they are ashamed of their origin. They are snobs. I am rather afraid that if an attempt succeeds to standardise our speech and language we may become a nation of mincers.

Now how about the B.B.C. announcers? Their tone is greatly admired, and I think rightly, considering what their job is. At any rate they avoid the tiresome habit which some people fall into from carelessness—that is, mumbling. But the accent of the announcers is so greatly admired (I believe they receive proposals of marriage by post because of their voices) that people all over the country are trying to copy them or instructing their children to drop their Suffolk or Gloucestershire accents, or whatever it may be, and to imitate the gentleman whom they hear with such rapture every evening telling them all the interesting news. If this is really going on it will be fatal. Mincing will advance by leaps and bounds. I don't say the announcers mince. If you try to copy them, however, then you *will* mince. But there is a worse danger still, and that is the talking films. If people begin to try to imitate that low sonorous metallic American, it will be nothing short of a catastrophe. Then there is something known as the 'college accent'. So far as I understand it, this is a term of disparagement sometimes used in a scoffing way against any form of more or less educated speech. I have not come across anyone at the universities with any particular accent. If the college accent means an artificial, affected and unnatural form of speech, anyone using it at Oxford or Cambridge would probably be put in the Cherwell or the Cam. Then there is something called clipped English. I think this is meant to describe the jargon of so-called Society people who have various affectations and mispronunciations of their own, probably cultivated. Some special word is chosen as being fashionable and it is run to death. For instance, 'marvellous' is quite a good word in itself. But I am dead sick of it. It is used so often that it has become almost meaningless. Such an expression as 'rather marvellous' is sheer nonsense. However, the use of the word is catching and in certain sets its use appears to be almost obligatory.

We must remember that in the course of time words change their meaning and new fashions come in. A man at the end of the eighteenth century writes in an article: 'I shall not use a fashionable word by saying I was very *sorry*'. Now, 'I'm very sorry' seems to us quite an ordinary expression, but it was only just coming into use then. Again, we use the word 'respectable' as meaning the opposite to disreputable, but Jane Austen uses it as meaning 'worthy of respect'. I could give a number of instances of words constantly used which formerly had quite different meanings. The best example perhaps comes in Dr. Johnson's criticism of Milton's 'Lycidas'. He was not an

admirer of Milton, but one might think he went too far when he said the poem was 'easy, vulgar and therefore disgusting'. But by 'vulgar' he simply meant popular, and the strictly correct meaning of 'disgusting' is 'not in good taste'.

Another good instance of the change in the meaning of words is the verdict given on Sir Christopher Wren's design for the new St. Paul's after the Cathedral had been burned down at the time of the Great Fire of London in the reign of Charles II. The great architect was told that his design had been approved and chosen because 'at the same time it was the most awful and the most artificial'. 'Awful' quite correctly means 'inspiring awe' and 'artificial' means 'designed with art'. But the sentence to our ears by no means seems to imply any praise.

In addition to fashionable words there are words which writers and speakers become very fond of till at last they become a sort of jargon. How often will you find words like these in a speech or a newspaper article: 'complex', 'psychology', 'mentality', 'implications', 'incidentally'? They sound rather grand—almost scientific. But often they are quite wrongly used. Their frequent repetition is tiresome. They become stereotyped.

Then there are verbal tricks of speech, especially in con-

versation, like the constant repetition of 'you know', 'do you see', 'I mean', 'of course'. The speaker or talker is quite unconscious of this trick, but for the listener it is irritating.

Actors have given up their old Victorian accent. You remember the hero in the melodrama always declared he was 'eenocent'. Many of the clergy still retain the peculiar clergymanic intonation. I can't think why.

But to return to actual accent and pronunciation, there ought to be no such thing as any fixed standard and no attempt should be made to enforce one. You remember the controversy recently as to whether the street in London should be pronounced Condit Street as a two-syllable word or Conduitt Street as a three-syllable word. Well, I can give evidence on both sides. I know a sixteenth-century document which spells the word as Condyt, showing it was pronounced as a two-syllable word, and I know a descendant of the family of Sir John Conduitt, Master of the Mint in 1727, who tells me the family have always called themselves Conduitt in three syllables.

My plea is that everyone should talk as he has been brought up to talk, however broad the accent may be. In any case the natural is infinitely preferable to the artificial.

## Two Conversations with Gluck

*The oldest opera which still holds its popularity on the stage is Gluck's 'Orpheus'. Baron Nicolay, who acted as tutor to the Grand Duke Paul, the heir of Catherine the Great of Russia, knew Gluck and attended the first performance of 'Orpheus' on October 5, 1762, in Vienna. The following extracts are taken from accounts of two interviews which Nicolay had with Gluck in 1762 and 1782; they give a vivid picture of the problems confronting the composer, as well as of his views of what opera should be. The German MS. of the interviews belongs to Baroness Marie Nicolay, who resides in Finland*

THE first opera which I heard and saw from beginning to end with one and the same pleasure was Gluck's 'Orfeo' in Vienna. The author himself was conducting the singing and the orchestra. Calzabigi the poet controlled the acting, Angiolini—a pupil of Hilferding—the ballet, and Guadagni the singer exhibited three qualities very seldom to be found in Italian *virtuosi*—sentiment, understanding, and pliability. Many times have I seen the same opera performed in other theatres, but heavens, what a difference from that first performance in Vienna! With intense pleasure I could then watch how throughout the whole performance all the members of the cast strove towards the same goal and helped each other in a fine spirit of co-operation. The poet had supplied the composer with a text appropriate for musical expression, both as regards feelings and images—in short vigorous and harmonious sentences for which Gluck found the most natural and striking melodies. The modest singer took no liberties, and performed everything as the master had conceived it. The ballet master had limited the dancing and the mime to grace and expression.

When I told Gluck and Calzabigi my views, 'You are right', replied Gluck, 'true singing does not consist in that display of overcoming difficulties which I am afraid is now the fashion, but in noble simplicity, truth and purity of expression. I have tried both styles, and I have found by experience that it is the easy thing, rather than the difficult thing, which is difficult. I am prepared to set the text of any article in the *Frankfurt Imperial Journal* to a piece of learned music, which all critics will admire; but I have had to labour for days in order to find the exact expression for a single verse in "Orfeo". The same applies to the singer; if he has a well-sounding and flexible voice as well as a musical ear, he will soon by training them be able to perform all imaginable musical acrobatics. But for the vivid delivery of an expressive song he needs genuine feeling and understanding, a soul, which the ordinary ignorant and imbecile *musicista* usually lacks. Originally Italian art, owing to its great masters, had reached such a degree of healthy and luxuriant beauty, that, in order to attract all hearts, it could appear in a light well-chosen attire hardly ornamented by a flower or a ribbon; however, the public—as is usually the case—gradually got tired of that impressive simplicity, it wanted more splendour, more

artifice, it preferred the mechanical cleverness of the performer to the genius of the composer, thus sacrificing, as it were, its heart to its ears. The *virtuoso* was only too glad to accept such a deterioration of taste, which made it easier for him to dominate on the stage and to triumph over the composer. The latter gave way, almost to the limits of servility, to these silly pretensions. Indeed, what could be more foolish than for a lover, when parting from his beloved in order to meet approaching death, to take leave of her in a protracted musical contortion spread over one single vowel; while she expresses her grief by a similar performance, until finally their common despair explodes in a duet in which they in turn proceed to something like wild gymnastics on one foot, either alternately or simultaneously'.

'But that is not all', broke in Calzabigi. 'Poets too have to face the pretensions of those vain idiots. Whenever a manager has arranged with the poet a new opera, and the poet has written the libretto, and the question arises of setting it to music, the two main performers immediately inquire whether each of them has his two arias, his cavatina and finally their common duet? Should anything be found missing, they refuse to keep their contract; the impresario in his trouble warns the poet that he may lose his salary, and the poor poet has to conform and introduce the alterations required, whether they are suitable or not. In Venice a young singer had achieved, by his *bravura* in the first opera of the carnival, an immense success. When the second opera was to be produced he asked the composer to insert the same aria instead of the new one. "That is impossible; in the new opera your main aria describes exactly the reverse of what is expressed in the first, namely the tranquillity of the sea. You had better speak to the poet. Perhaps he will give you the satisfaction of altering the text". The singer approaches the poet. "Your desire is preposterous; my hero is a silent sufferer, how could I let him burst forth in fury? The text must remain unchanged". The artist loses his head. The day of the first performance he arranges the affair with the orchestra, and to the music of a storm he sings the words referring to the calm of the sea'.

'It is fortunate', remarked Gluck, 'that we have got here in Vienna, a more educated public, and that Guadagni is such a reasonable and responsive singer. But you see, gentlemen, that unless the poet and the conductor insist upon their

rights, music will become altogether debased, and instead of being a divine harmony, will be reduced to the position of a foolish woman with nothing but her vain adornments'.

'I thank you, my dear Gluck', said I, 'for the lesson which you have given me and for the courage and consolation which I have gathered from it. I am no longer afraid of you, and now I dare to make a full confession of my ideas on music. With an untrained ear, but with a warm heart and a tenderness for all that is beautiful, I went to Italy, the glorified centre of music, anticipating with joy the pleasures which awaited me. But already at the first opera in Milan I felt like the young boy whom his uncle took for the first time to the play. Whenever he heard people applauding he asked: "Uncle, was that beautiful? Am I also to rejoice?" Without knowing why, that music, and the constant artificiality either of the composer or of the artist, roused in me nothing but a cool admiration; something made me yawn, and even irritated me. And when I heard the deafening applause and the general approval by society of the very passages which had appeared to me dull or even repellent, then I felt uncomfortable, and began to doubt whether I had any true musical sense at all. I was afraid to express my views in the presence of such experts lest I should be made fun of; so in order to be taken for a competent judge I imitated their delight and enthusiasm, and became hypocritical. However, my conscience smote me. I decided to examine the matter more closely, and to try to become sensitive to all the impressions produced by the opera. Only then did I realise that the purely artificial adornments displeased me only for the reason that they were out of place. Yet I must admit, in justice to Italy, that I have heard there two sorts of music with real delight. Firstly, at the *opera buffa*, where the composers confine themselves to light melodies, natural and simple; and secondly, at the music schools of Venice and Naples, and especially at the performances of the Papal Choir, as well as at some private concerts, where the works of Corelli, the Stabat Mater of Pergolesi, and the Passion of Jammelli were sung; there I felt truly enthusiastic—and even now the recollection of these masterpieces is more vivid than all the scales and *tremoli* of a Gabrielli and a Marchesi'.

'You are right, my friend!' said Gluck, interrupting me. 'Keep for ever your orthodox faith as regards the opera. But let me add one word about the talents of a Marchesi and of a Gabrielli. Speed, faultless leaps from the lowest to the highest notes, chromatic scales—in a word, the command of all those difficulties—has its value as a training in the art of singing. Nor do I reject them at all as such; I am only against their being used too often and not in their proper place. I can admire them in a violin or flute concerto, so why not in a vocal concerto, in which, after all, the singer is no more to me than any other person playing an instrument? In Italy the *opera seria* in our days is nothing else but a concerto produced with theatrical pomp, meant to satisfy only the ear and the eye. People are attracted not by the action, nor by the hero, but by the concerto, by the singer. No wonder, therefore, that in such a state of the theatre especially among people with a trained and sensitive ear the *virtuosi* are popular and almost adored not as actors, but as singers. I was astonished to notice more than once how the lowest ranks of society, admitted to the rehearsals of some new opera without any pay, and consisting of porters, cab drivers, and lackeys, who fill

the pit, very often responded to fine passages and new ideas by shouting: *bravo, il maestro!* when they meant the music, and: *bravo, il cantante!* when they meant the artist'.

'That opera in its own home [Gluck continued] should have deviated from its essential purpose of touching the hearts and intellect of the audience, and should have become debased to a mere concerto, is due mostly to the miserable acting, grimaces and contortions of the singers, their indistinct pronunciation and mangling of words which the composers permit themselves. Hence the small attention paid by the audience to the action or the poetry, their loud conversation, their chewing and sucking of sweets in the boxes, their complete indifference to everything with the exception of the cheering of one or two favourites, their banging of doors, and the almost sudden disappearance of the greater part of society folk at the finish. Fortunately in most nations on this side of the Alps the opera has preserved all its dignity, and is intent upon touching not only the ear but the heart as well'.

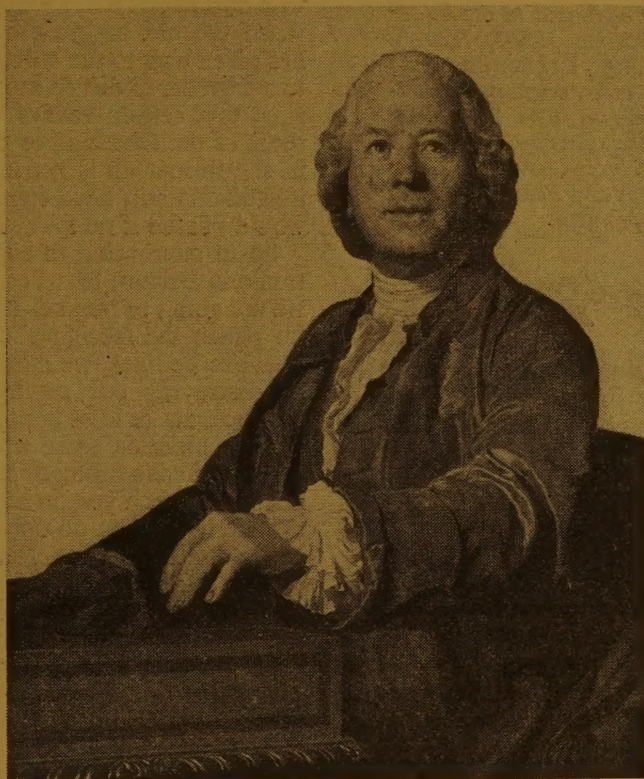
Soon after his 'Orfeo' Gluck wrote his 'Alceste', which he considered to be his masterpiece. I did not hear it till 1782, when I listened to it, performed under his direction, with the greatest pleasure. Madame Sano took the main part with the same sentiment as that shown by Guadagni in the 'Orfeo'. Gluck had just arrived from Paris, where he had stayed several years and had introduced into the French Grand Opera a change in the Paris taste.

I was very sorry for Gluck that he should spend his genius upon satisfying that unmusical nation; still, the revolution which he brought about in their taste may serve as some excuse. However, one can notice in those works of his which were written for the French public how frequent and considerable were his concessions to the habits and the taste of the French. When I mentioned this point during our second interview he asked me for the following day to his country

house. I found a house in the best taste with a large and beautiful garden. We had our meal served on plate, and his cellar was well provided with the best of wines. 'Pardon my excursion to the banks of the Seine', he remarked. 'Where in Germany could I have found all this?'

True, he confessed to me the unspeakable difficulties he had had to overcome in dealing with the ignorant, obstinate, and conceited French singers of both sexes. Even some of the best who had to sing the first parts, knew no notes and had to be taught by having the parts sung to them. While the lady singers were being taught, they admitted so many admirers that they were unable to remain attentive and be patient.

After his return from Paris to Vienna, Gluck was often ailing, but he undertook with an excessive zeal Klopstock's 'Hermann's Battle'. He had hardly played one scene to me when his wife called me aside to beg me to divert him from that enterprise since she was afraid that the excitement and strain might cause a serious illness and even premature death. I promised that I would try. 'No, my friend', he replied. 'By "Hermann's Battle" I will secure my claim to immortality, you must not bother about a prolongation of mortality and its pleasures'. I could see that I should be unable to persuade him to abandon his work. However he apparently gave way to the supplications of his wife, or perhaps death left him no time to accomplish the work, because I have heard no more about it since he passed away.



Gluck

Rischgitta



# The Listener

*All communications should be addressed to the Editor of THE LISTENER, Broadcasting House, London, W.1. The articles in THE LISTENER being mainly reprints of broadcast talks, original contributions are not invited. Articles in THE LISTENER do not necessarily represent the views of the B.B.C. Yearly Subscription rates (including postage): Home and Canada, 17s. 4d.; Overseas and Foreign, 19s. 6d. Shorter periods, pro rata.*

## Baedeker's Britain

IN the last few years we in Britain have woken up to the fact, realised long since by France and Switzerland, that the tourist industry may be a large and profitable item in a nation's accounts; and judging from the last year or two it looks as if we were approaching a time when the amount of money spent by foreign tourists here will equal the amount spent by British tourists abroad. We are naturally at every pains to increase this invisible export. The Government does not yet subsidise the industry, as it does in Italy, but we have national campaigns urging the world to 'Come to Britain', and local authorities are empowered to levy a rate for the purpose of advertising the holiday charms of their district. Seeking to accelerate and perfect this process of attracting the tourist, Sir Stephen Tallents has lately enumerated some of the methods of enticement: cunningly worded letters to friends abroad to make them think with eagerness of England, less litter in the countryside, more beautiful approaches by sea and land, better coffee in our hotels—in short, everything to make England a Baedeker paradise, where every inn is recommended and every view-point starred. No one would quarrel with such good deeds; yet Sir Stephen Tallents' whole attitude to the question raises a general problem which those who seek to promote our tourist traffic seldom seem to face—the expediency of the policy of 'pleasing the foreigner'.

Consider the beginning of the great vogue of tourism in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The emphasis was always on scenes of wild natural beauty, on historic association, or on places whose inhabitants in their dress, language, customs and way of life differed widely from the visitor. Hence the popularity of Switzerland, the Tyrol, the Rhine, the coast of Norway—all places which have, or originally had, at least two out of these three requirements. Now if the first thought of a country and its inhabitants is to please the foreigner, every kind of effort will be made to preserve these desirable qualities. Thus, in order to give romantic gratification to New Yorkers doing a fortnight's cruise in the Caribbean, the natives of one Central American Republic were ordered not to have any modern contrivance anywhere near the coast; to please the 'olde-worlde' minded tripper from the New World, an English country hotel is built in Tudor style and puts its waiters into leather jerkins. The absurdity of this atti-

tude, whereby things are not valued for themselves—as being genuinely interesting or historic—but for their power to attract custom, is nicely illustrated by the Stratford tradesman who remarked, 'I am sure we ought to be very much obliged to Mr. Shakespeare for being born here, for I don't know what we should have done without him'. But, unfortunately, those qualities which endear a place to the tourist are precisely those which the tourist is most apt to damage. Wild nature is tamed by hotels and railways, mediæval towns lose their antiquity when traversed by charabancs, simple peasants lose their artless charm when they realise that their ordinary activities have a market value in the visitor's eye. To compare a modern book about the Alps or the Tyrol with those written in the 'sixties or 'seventies is to realise how much of the excitement of travel has gone when communications are regular, when by studying his guide-book beforehand the traveller can foretell whether he is to dine and sleep in good, bad or indifferent comfort, and when the old haggling over mules, guides and porters has given way to the official state tariff. And so the sensitive traveller is driven more and more to byways, preferring, say, certain valleys of the Jura or the Pyrenees to those of the Oberland or the Engadine, precisely because in the former all is *not* laid out for his benefit, and the inhabitants still have some life of their own which they would pursue if no tourist again came near them.

So in attempting to augment our share of the tourist traffic in Britain, let us at least be clear as to the method we are going to pursue. If we make our criterion entirely 'to please the foreigner' and assiduously cultivate those qualities he likes, we may add to our income at the risk of destroying our capital. Pleasing the foreigner, for instance, has at least been partly responsible for the sham antique building craze which has hindered the development of a contemporary style of architecture. But it does not mean that if you do not admit the criterion of pleasing the foreigner, you do not in fact attract him. Stockholm, which built its Town Hall to please itself, draws many visitors to see it, and the same is true of New York and its skyscrapers—it is surely healthier in a country to rely thus on its living achievements than on mummifying its past glories. Spain stages bull-fights to please the Spaniards, but thereby also pleases the stronger-minded tourist. In Poland they make *blini* because the Poles like it, but visitors like it too. In short, it looks as if the more successfully you lead your ordinary life, the more you may attract the tourist; but the more you go out of your way to attract him the more quickly you may make him tired of you. We should prefer to see a Britain of fine new buildings and beautiful roads, with no litter and no ribbon development, with good coffee in every hotel and hot and cold in every bedroom, because the British themselves demanded it, than a Britain in which all the taxi-drivers spoke five languages, novels had paper covers, and the game of cricket had been speeded up out of all recognition because the foreigner liked it.

## Week by Week

WITHIN the last week we have seen the beginnings of two movements to improve the looks of our surroundings. The first, an official and compulsory one, is the L.C.C.'s new by-laws for regulating the appearance of petrol stations in certain streets and places. Although the acceptance of its standard design—black panels, 'lettered in white or silver and set in a scarlet frame'—can only be enforced within those selected areas defined by the 1928 Petroleum Act, much all-round improvement may be expected to follow this official recognition of the importance of design. The second movement, an unofficial one, aims at educating rather than compelling an improvement in public taste. By means of a newly-formed organisation, 'Sculptured Memorials and Headstones', it

aims at 'restoring dignity and beauty to the churchyard'. The organisation, a business enterprise, pledged to high standards of design, is to be guided by a distinguished advisory committee of artists and proposes to display at its showrooms (12 Lower Regent Street) the best contemporary designs. As Mr. Herbert Read demonstrated in an article in *THE LISTENER* for May 2, there has been a steady decline in the English tradition of gravestone sculpture ever since the eighteenth century. 'Whited sepulchres of Italian marble' have invaded our churchyards, with 'a debris of styles and a debauch of ornament'. One would expect the recoil from all this flamboyancy to be towards gravity and simplicity, and at least one famous contemporary monument, the standard headstone of the Imperial War Graves Commission, has pointed that way. Many of the examples shown in the organisation's booklet, however, continue the nineteenth-century allegorical tradition, only at a higher level of taste. What is surely needed, if public taste is to be affected to any great extent, is the production of simple, well-designed headstones, at a price enabling them successfully to compete with the cheap imported varieties. Besides this there is the question of stone, on which the society rightly places great emphasis. Italian marble does not harmonise with our soft skies and green countryside, but there are a great variety of English stones that do. Here surely is the chance for the craft to develop locally and restore the high traditions of the past. In all these matters the influence of the new society should be felt. If the choosing of a tombstone is for the average human being 'the one ineluctable aesthetic act', it is obvious, from the appearance of our churchyards, that it is one in which he is sorely in need of instruction and advice.

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A recent article in *The Times* brought belated recognition to a very remarkable man who died more than thirty years ago, but whose ideas are now being put into practice. His name was Cecil B. Phipson, and he lived in Tyrone. He devoted himself to economics outside the ordinary academic and City paths, and developed his ideas in long and difficult works which have, says Professor J. W. Scott, 'all the look of crank literature'. 'But', he adds, 'let any expert persevere with Phipson and I cannot but think he will find a new path broken in economic theory'. Phipson's contention was that while machines are natural, full advantage is not derived from them unless the men they displace can gravitate back to the land and there maintain themselves. Great stagnant pools of idle men, such as exist today, are the very machine for want of which industry is languishing. To provide such men with means of supporting themselves Professor Scott and the National Home-craft Association, helped by *The Spectator*, began in 1926 to set up self-subsistence groups under Phipson's theory of money. Phipson, before Mr. Keynes, asked the question whether it was really desirable for there to be one uniform money for the world, as there is under an automatic gold standard. By 1892 he had given to the world a treatise whose argument is that a nation should not buy abroad except with money which is a credit note in itself, and, substituting individual for nation, Professor Scott has furnished his unemployed men with paper chits for the articles they made. With these chits they can buy the products of other members of the pool, rough articles for the most part. 'They have a common cupboard and a currency of their own'. If the chits were changeable into money, they would be spent in shops, there would be no market for the homely articles, and the men would be unemployed again. As it is they employ each other. The vicious circle by which through invention men lose their incomes and so cannot buy what the invention can make is only broken if they can fall back upon self-support. Professor Scott calls on wealthy men to 'round up the unemployed into groups producing their own wealth. It is a stroke of double salvation. It saves the victims; and it saves industry. It is not necessarily a Government matter. There is a living in it. There is even an honourable profit. It is for individuals'.

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If the individual genius of a Suzanne Lenglen or a Joyce Wethered has, since the War, done much to establish women's tennis and golf as serious sporting activities (in the

sense that women's cricket perhaps is not), the achievements of the competitors at the Fourth Women's World Games just completed at the White City have probably done the same for athletics. It is not that the records achieved there in such abundance are yet within striking distance of the men's, and women athletes will no doubt always suffer disparagement from indulging in a sport in which direct comparison with men is possible. For example, the women's world record for the 100 metres of 11½ seconds about equals the standard of a boy of sixteen to seventeen; though the remarkable Czechoslovakian runner Z. Koubkova's time of 2 minutes 12½ seconds for the half-mile would be good enough to win that race at most of our public schools. But the judgment of whether a sport is fitting for women does not depend so much on the standard achieved as on the way of achieving it, on the possibility of reaching the same perfection of style as men can. Primarily it is an æsthetic consideration; in the games where women shine particularly, for example lacrosse, they are often neater and prettier to watch than men. And now the public has been surprised to find women running, jumping and hurdling with grace and skill (though it is a pity that the press photographers should have been so intent on turning serious athletic competitors into a musical comedy chorus). Henceforth women's athletics will probably provide a recognised feature of English sport. But England has a long way to go to catch up with her Continental rivals. In Germany, the cult of the *Sportmädels*, under the direct patronage of a government which regards sport as a part of 'health education' and as vital to the national morale, has produced a winning team in each of the World Games. It is significant that the captain of one of the victorious German teams ascribed its success to the fact that in Germany women athletes received advice and encouragement from men's organisations, whereas in England the activities of women athletes were frowned upon. Although Germany once more easily triumphed at the White City, it is probable that the achievements of athletes like Fräulein Kraus and Fräulein Mauermeyer will do much to create the public interest upon which the development of our own champions depends.

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Our Scottish correspondent writes: It is one of our minor misfortunes that the arrival of the main body of tourists from the South is apt to coincide with the wettest patch of our northern summer. So far as West Highland weather is calculable at all, it is a reasonable assumption that the first fortnight of August is not reliable in the matters of bright sunshine and unclouded skies; and during the Lammas floods of the current month one has encountered English and French travellers who, having seen nothing but clinging mist and grey seas for days on end or having been washed out of camping sites, were not unnaturally inclined to take the propaganda of the Scottish Travel Association as a species of personal insult. It is idle to assure the disgruntled holiday-maker that a spot of bad weather is a risk implicit in the search for beauty on the Atlantic seaboard, and that the reward of patience is in glimpses of supreme loveliness. Nor is it adequate comfort for the disappointed that artists have found beauty in the mist itself, for a big hill covered to its base in wreaths of drifting smoke does not notably cheer the soul, however much it may impress the mind. How it may be contrived one cannot imagine, but it would be helpful if intending tourists could be more fully enlightened as to what to expect. Whosoever visits us in June may be tolerably certain of gloriously bright days. July offers pretty fair chances on the whole. Most Scots folk would choose to give August a miss. The wise and fortunate come among us in September. And my own experience is that Scottish travel can be at its most delightful in October, when the roads are empty and browns and golds on moor and hill at their most superb. This justifies the S.T.A. in its campaign to prolong the Scottish holiday season, especially when it is understood that the reservations apply to the glamorous West Highlands only. In the Lothians and the coast of the Moray Firth Scotland has some of the driest spots in Great Britain. For the rest, we have to insist patriotically that in the vagaries of West Highland climate lie one essential charm of that region.

## 'This Freedom'—VII

# The Economics of British Liberty

By LORD MELCHETT

WE have all been taught to take pride in British liberty. Particularly during the latter half of the last century and the beginning of this century, the subject of liberty was much to the forefront in the ideas inculcated in the rising generation of Britain during its school years. History provides a long list of National heroes who have fought for and shaped the liberties of the citizens of this country.

It is not necessary to recapitulate either the outstanding events or the long list of names which have gone to build up this aspect of the nation's story, but it is as well to bear in mind that the struggle for the maximum liberty of the subject is always taking place on shifting ground under the process of continual readjustment. The tendency in England has always been to resist domination or oppression, whether of a political, religious or economic character, and to strive towards that equilibrium which produces the maximum liberty for the individual, consonant with the orderly conduct of the State. This struggle of the State against the individual and of the individual against the State is inherent in any collective human effort. In different periods of the world's history, and in different countries, two extremes have predominated: the idea of the entire subordination of the individual to the requirements of the State, and the idea of the maximum subordination of the State to the liberty of the individual.

## Freedom to Work

The British people above all have been more successful in arriving at the correct equilibrium between these two points than any other people in the world. This is principally due to the existence of two most important natural factors: the English Channel and the Gulf Stream. The first, as a natural moat, has protected us from foreign invasion for many centuries, thereby allowing our institutions to develop and arrive at maturity at a rate almost unknown in any other part of Europe. The second has given us an equable climate, which tends to produce a citizen in whom the qualities of moderation and stability are highly developed, and in whom excitability and passion are under firm control. In spite of these facts, the struggles necessary to achieve the constant readjustment by which liberty is alone obtained, have in this country been constant and continued, and we are once more in the early stages of this century, faced with the eternal problem of the relation of individual liberty to the function of the total State in its most modern form.

In Great Britain today it is no longer possible to maintain that the ordinary citizen is in a position to earn his living solely as the result of hard work and honest endeavour. For the past decade there have been between one and two million men and women out of employment. It is now generally agreed that the majority of these people are deprived of employment through no fault of their own, and must be maintained in reasonable conditions by their more fortunate fellow-citizens. This fact strikes at one of the greatest liberties that can be enjoyed by the citizen of any country: the liberty to work where and how he chooses. It affects not only those who are out of employment, but also those who are in employment, whose power of choice is naturally limited by their fear of spending many years in the ranks of the unemployed should they once give up the work in which they are fortunate enough to be engaged.

## Liberty Thwarting Itself

Many schemes have been suggested and devised for alleviating this state of affairs. Large-scale settlement in our Overseas Dominions; readjustment of hours and wages, so as to share the essential labour of the country more evenly among a greater number of people; and other notions, have been canvassed and discussed for over a decade without any effective action being taken. The absence of action in this respect can, upon analysis, be brought back to a simple point: that any of

the main solutions advanced would necessitate the considerable coercion of a large number of individuals who have been given the right to protect their liberty by means of a manhood franchise. Here we see the not unusual paradox of liberty thwarting itself. The solution of a problem which affects the liberty of all citizens is frequently prevented because no authority in the State feels strong enough to incur unpopularity by interference with liberties which are today enjoyed by great sections of the population. It is obvious that the industrial community would tend to resist any legislation which forced upon them a limitation of hours of labour and wage rates, of such an order as to be of any value for the solution of the main problems. They would not unnaturally count it as an unwarrantable interference with the freedom so essential to the industrialist of conducting his business as he himself thinks best, and point out that hampered by Governmental restrictions he would be utterly unable to maintain competitive power in the export markets. At the same time, it can easily be pointed out to the industrialists and the bankers of the nation that the very liberties they enjoy not only in this but in other respects, enable them to compete with each other in such a way as to render their production uneconomic and to delay their proper development, and that as they are unable to agree among themselves as to the best course to be pursued it is necessary for the community to step in through Parliament to regulate their affairs for them. The cotton and iron and steel industries among many others are outstanding cases of this type. It has become clear to many industrialists, apart altogether from the more modern school of politicians, that the time has come for the regulation of industrial enterprise, upon which the wealth and power of this country entirely depend.

## Facing the Problem in America, Russia and Italy

Looking round the world one finds that the experience of this country is by no means isolated. In America, Italy, Germany, Poland, Russia and Japan the same problem has arisen, and has been dealt with in a variety of ways according to the temperament and character of the institutions of the country in question. The United States, in characteristic fashion, has made a bold and violent experiment, characterised throughout by its democratic spirit and much boosted constitution. That constitution is placing a great deal of power in the hands of its executive individual, the President, who is frequently restricted and kept in check by an elected popular assembly, which in reality lays down the main lines on which the industrial reorganisation in America is bound to travel. The code system enabled industries to come together to frame their own rules for their own control, subject to the broad outlines dictated by the State. According to our standards, the experiment has been too rapid and the changes contemplated too large to work smoothly, but it remains to be seen to what extent Mr. Roosevelt's 'new deal' will ultimately be a success.

The changes in Russia have also been typical of that country. The whole theory of the constitution being on an intellectual basis far above the heads of the majority of mankind, the actual practice of the Government has descended to those violent forms which have characterised the management of that great country for centuries past. Their conception of industrial reorganisation, being of a similarly grandiose character, seems to have been carried out on a magnificent scale with the greatest incompetence.

Italy alone has perhaps developed a new type, or at any rate reverted to a type so long since unknown in practice as to have been eliminated from practical consideration. The reorganisation of the Corporate State has been carried out with the thoroughness and decision which reminds one of the history of the mighty City States, Milan, Florence and Venice, and with a skill and subtlety which would not have been unworthy of that master politician Machiavelli. It has stood a fairly long test of time, appears to have been able to maintain itself against all the shocks of the post-War economic situation, and has con-

ferred real benefits on the people through the reorganisation of Italian industry.

### New Readjustments in Our Industrial Life

Here in Great Britain we shall have to develop our own methods. I am sure they will have little or nothing in common with those overseas. However, the same broad and general outlook affects the whole world today, and it is clear that reorganisation with the aid of legislation is necessary. The gap left by the casualties of the War between those now holding power and those of the younger rising generation may have to be bridged by an unusually rapid advance of the younger generation.

There are several main lines on which this reorganisation may develop. There is the Parliamentary line, although, as I have pointed out before in other writings, the present constitution of the House of Commons is so unsuitable for the management and reorganisation of industry that an industrial Chamber may have to be created, specifically designed for this purpose and incorporated in our present constitution. There is also the Guild system, with strong roots in British history, where, by means of associations of manufacturers and merchants interested in the same types of business, industry and commercial enterprise could be regulated by those most intimately concerned with it, in such a way as to fall in with the general plan conceived by the Government. To my mind, the second form is not antagonistic but complementary to the first. A detailed study would reveal two possible forms of industrial reorganisation: that of great amalgamations each controlled by one directing power, entirely united financially and fitting in with the general economic scheme; alternatively an association consisting of a number of smaller and perhaps more easily managed companies agreeing amongst themselves to limit their activities in connection with their commercial life to the general necessities of the State. Some progress has been made in recent legislation in regard to the first of these forms, inasmuch as it is now possible by law to compel

the minority shareholders to accept shares in a holding company and so eliminate technical difficulties which otherwise enable a minority of shareholders to present obstacles to the rationalisation of industry. So far, however, no steps have been taken to enable the association type of organisation to compel the recalcitrant minority to fall in with the views of the majority of their trade or industry. It seems to me that the next legislative step that must be taken, and which could be taken at once, is an Act to give legal sanction to the formation by majority interests of industrial or trade associations, and legal sanction to the decisions of the majority of such an association. Such a step would be entirely consonant with the history of our industrial development and would be in keeping with our tradition of maintaining a proper equilibrium between the liberty of the individual and the necessities of the State. It is obvious that this is only one step of many that need to be taken as a part of a much larger plan for the reorganisation of our industrial life. That such a reorganisation is bound to come about is not to be overlooked, nor must it be forgotten that the responsibility for it rests as much upon those of the older generation, whose tendency is to delay change, as upon the younger generation, whose nature is to press for change. It is not enough to try to impress upon the young and active members of the community that they must acquire a sense of responsibility and moderation in order to avoid unnecessary and undesirable disturbances. The responsibility for disorderly developments is a charge against those who by damming the natural flow of reform create a turbulent flood in place of the even flow of the natural stream.

New readjustments must be made not only between the individual and the group, but also between kindred groups in order to find a new expression of liberty in the orderly conduct of life. How much liberty can be given will depend almost entirely upon the extent to which the collective well-being over long periods of time is accepted by everyone as being of greater value than the prospect of immediate personal advantage.

### Educational Issues of Today—IV

## Has Co-Education Been a Failure?

By B. A. HOWARD

*Mr. Howard is Headmaster of Addey and Stanhope School, New Cross*

**H**AS co-education been a failure? It all depends upon what is meant by 'co-education'; for the word has meant different things at different times.

A generation ago a co-educational school all too often meant a school to which both sexes were admitted, simply because it was too expensive to build two schools, one for boys and the other for girls; but, once admitted, the sexes were kept as separate as possible. Whenever it could be managed, boys and girls were taught in different classes; if that was not feasible, the best was made of a bad job by placing the sexes carefully on opposite sides of the classroom, and forbidding them to speak to one another. (The only exception occurred when, as a punishment, a bad boy might be disgraced by being told to sit among the girls.) If the system may be caricatured just a little in order to bring out what really was its salient feature, there existed a kind of invisible line drawn down the middle of the school, and each sex was enjoined to keep strictly to its own side of the line. If a girl strayed over the line, she would be sent (if detected) to the senior mistress, who, with many a shocked expression of protest, would endeavour to make her see her sin in its true light, and who, if inclined to be sentimental, might perhaps end by having a good weep with the girl over the frailties of our mortal nature. If a boy transgressed, he would be sent to the headmaster, who would probably tell him less about the abstract nature of sin, and who would take care to see that any weeping done as a result of the interview should be all on one side. But the result of the interview was the same in either case; the offence would be repeated the next day if the opportunity offered; you may drive out Nature with a pitchfork, but she will return. A school run on such principles was, and is, almost certain to be a failure; it typifies everything that co-education, according to

its modern exponents, ought not to be. There can grow out of it no understanding between boys and girls, no comradeship or friendliness, no appreciation of another's point of view; nothing but dark hints of a mystery, attractive just because it is a mystery, and consequent clandestine flirtations.

That kind of school, at least in its extreme form, is rare nowadays, though it exists. It has been gradually replaced by the more modern type of co-educational school. This type tries to give its boys and girls real freedom; which means, of course, freedom both to associate and, at times, to separate. It believes in co-operation between the sexes, but it sees no value in enforced and unwilling co-operation. It separates boys and girls for a few subjects, such as games, gymnastics, vocational training, in which the powers or the needs of the sexes are obviously different, but it throws open all the main institutions of the school to everyone; and it finds that, given a staff which treats boys and girls impartially, on their merits, an atmosphere develops in the school in which boys and girls accept their mixing for what it is, an entirely natural state of affairs. They mix in school very much as brothers and sisters mix at home—and, like brothers and sisters, they have at times their healthy little disagreements. In such an atmosphere, devoid of sex tension, each sex can contribute its own special gifts to the life of the school. Each, without consciously realising it, helps the other; each gets some knowledge of the other's point of view. The boy's dislike of sentimentality helps to give balance and stability to a girl at what is apt to be an emotional and unstable period of her growth; and he in turn benefits from the greater emphasis which the girl places upon courtesy and refinement.

The process is unconscious rather than deliberate, and it is a mistake, most co-educationists think, to try and bring it to

the surface and make it conscious before a boy or girl is ready for it. The mere fact (without any argument from anyone) that the boy is educated with girls, on level terms, is bound unconsciously to make him see that they are as much a part of the world as he is, and that their interests have to be con-

impressed, but will still want to ask a series of questions. He will not ask whether co-education makes boys effeminate and girls hoydens, because he will see for himself that this is not the case. He may, however, feel that boys need a man's hand; the co-educationists will tell him that they certainly do, and that in a mixed

school, staffed by approximately equal numbers of masters and mistresses, they are able to get it. But they also need, if their development is to be complete, a woman's hand too. He will ask whether boys and girls work at the same rate. He will be told that, on the whole, they do not; but that as no two human beings work at the same rate this is a difficulty in all types of schools, and there are various technical devices for overcoming it quite effectively in co-educational ones. He will ask whether boys and girls approach school subjects from the same angle; and he will be told that their different points of view are not so much a difficulty as an opportunity for widening the outlooks of both. He will ask whether their interests do not lead them to specialise in different directions, and he will find that a good co-educational school gives plenty of facilities for both boys and girls to specialise in many directions. And he may ask, finally, what is the effect of co-education upon after life. He will find that co-educationists think that their work is of considerable help in preparing boys and girls for citizenship in a world in which men and women have to



Boys segregated from girls in a village schoolroom

Photograph: Edith Tudor Hart

sidered as much as his own. He will probably find out that in some respects they are different from him, that they have their own ways of regarding certain matters. So much the better; that is one of the things co-educationists want him to discover. He may start by being slightly contemptuous of girls; well, we must not be too hard on him for that; for even grown-up people have been known to be contemptuous of those who have not the sense to think as they do. The boy may not, then, admit girls in his own mind to full equality with his own noble sex, but as day by day he works with them, and is sometimes outstripped by them, he will at least come to say of them, as a former Master of Balliol once said of undergraduates of St. John's College, that 'even they are God's creatures'. And in a boys' school he will not get even as far as that.

But the good mixed school, the co-educationists believe, will get him further. He will leave it, not with the idea that there are no differences between men and women, but with the idea that the genius of both is needed to set the world in order; with some experience of co-operation, and with a vision of life not as a competition of men and women, but as an endless adventure demanding the best efforts of both.

An observer who sees a school of this kind will probably be

live and work together in entirely different conditions from those which prevailed thirty years ago. It may be possible to assemble one half of a Morris car at Coventry, the other half at Cowley, to wheel them together at the last moment



Open-air art class in a co-educational school

and thus to make the perfect automobile. But you cannot, the co-educationists will tell him, educate all your boys in one school, all your girls in another, throw them together at the last moment and expect them to make a perfect world.

# A 'Flying Padre' in Outback Australia

By the Rev. L. DANIELS

IF you had scanned the Personal Column of the *Morning Post* on the first Monday in October, 1926, you would have seen this appeal. "Wanted. "Moth aeroplane" for church work in Australian bush. Parish as big as England. Will you help? . . ." Needless to say, this advertisement excited some comment, curiosity, and a little criticism. Some thought it a joke. 'Religion at a hundred miles an hour' was a headline in one Australian paper. I was not at all clear, myself, as to how it would finally work out.

I had travelled round my big roadless parish on those rough bush tracks for four years in an old Ford, which, swerving in the sand, on one occasion had climbed six feet up a gum tree. It took me the best part of a fortnight, and longer if the weather was bad, to visit an outpost of the parish, called Tibooburra, 250 miles from my centre, travelling by car. The going was arduous and slow. How could I travel faster? Sometimes when I struck a good patch of country I would open the throttle until my old 'Lizzie' rattled in all her bones, and I longed for a pair of wings and my thoughts went back to war days when I was a pilot in the Air Force.

I returned to England and in six months, through the generosity of many folk, among whom were Lord Wakefield and Sir Evelyn Wrench, sufficient money was contri-

buted to buy a De Havilland Moth. Numerous questions, mostly beginning with 'How can you . . . ?' were asked as to whether the scheme was practicable. These questions will readily suggest themselves to your mind. 'How can you land in their backyard?' 'How will you manage if anything goes wrong over 600 miles from the nearest aircraft company?' and so on. I answered some of these questions at the time but some remained unanswered until experience gave the reply.

To make a long story short, early in 1928 I took off from Essenden Aerodrome, Melbourne, on the big adventure of my life, somewhat like Saint Paul 'not knowing what things might befall me'. On my arrival at Wilcannia, my centre on the Darling River, the local men built me a small hangar close to the township on one of the many claypans which make such perfect natural aerodromes. From the centre I began my many flights to and fro across that vast remote parish. At the close of every year I used to fly the machine down to Sydney or Melbourne for overhaul, but during the year I had to manage running repairs myself. These sometimes evoked caustic comment from the air mechanics at the aircraft depot, as in extremity I was forced to use fencing wire, or a piece of packing-case, to effect a minor repair. In practice, I found that the annual overhaul was so thoroughly carried out at De Havillands that very seldom did anything go wrong during the year.

Conditions for flying were perfect during the winter. How I loved that early Sunday morning flight in the crisp still air, a hundred miles down the river to Monindie for early service, sometimes disturbing the slow-flying pelicans and black swans, sometimes setting the white 'cockies' wheeling and screeching. Flying in the 'never-never' in winter time is a joy never to be forgotten. But in the hot dry summer it can be a perilous game, especially in the middle hours of the day. Those columns of whirling sand thousands of feet high trailing across the desert make flying unpleasant to the pilot as they hit him with sledge-

hammer blows and toss him up hundreds of feet like a cork. But these 'willy-willys' (as they are called locally) are child's play compared to the 'dinkum' duststorm, which comes tearing down like lightning out of the sandy wastes of Central Australia. For this reason, I usually travelled during the summer at dawn, or just before sunset, when as a rule there is a lull. Sometimes the weather nearly trapped me by its trickery. I well remember, one morning, setting out from Tibooburra in the far north-west corner of my parish to fly home. There was a tense stillness in the hot air and not a cloud in the sky. I took off and had travelled about 10 miles on my course when I observed a sinister red haze in the south-west approaching fast. I wheeled round quickly and raced back to Tibooburra. Luckily my friends who had seen me

off were still on the aerodrome, and as I landed they grasped the wings and steadied the plane. The duststorm swept down upon us in all its fury as we turned the Moth into the wind, folded the wings and tied her down. All that day the storm raged, visibility was limited to 10 yards with a wind of 50 miles an hour blowing. Next day came the calm after storm and I sailed away home.

On another occasion, the river line was broken in a storm. News came through from a township 250 miles south that a lad had died suddenly and they wished to get in touch with the

father 70 miles up the river. The roads were impassable for cars, the post office rang me up. So, I flew up to the station to break the sad news, then flew the father the 250 miles so that he was in time for the burial of his son. In such ways as this the plane proved beyond question that it could do what other forms of transport could not; moreover, it was a great time-saver.

Once I flew down to Synod at Hay, 250 miles in 3 hours, and found that some of the clergy had not arrived owing to flooded roads, though they had been on the track for three days. I used to land outside the Bishop's Lodge and push the Moth through the gate on to the lawn. But I could never persuade the Bishop to accompany me on my flights, as he would carry numerous suitcases with him. Moreover, he insisted on smoking whilst travelling outback, and this, in an open cockpit, I would not allow even a Bishop to do.

Many and varied were my experiences with passengers—from the terrified 'bush-whacker' who grimly held on to the centre-section struts during the whole journey, to the sceptical priest who was persuaded by his fellow-clerics to make his last will and testament before he took his first flight with me. I promised to fly low so that he shouldn't have so far to fall. We were within 200 feet of the ground the whole journey of over 100 miles. He thoroughly enjoyed it.

A passenger who gave me more anxiety was a 'drunk' whom I was bound to carry on an urgent mission over a belt of mallee scrub. I was afraid he would discover the duplicate throttle and experiment with it. Surreptitiously he lit a cigarette aloft, but nothing untoward happened.

A parson friend, who occasionally accompanied me on my flight, once gave me an anxious time. He would insist on wrapping himself in a huge blanket to keep warm. He was also keen on photography and frequently hung out over the wing, getting a snap here and there. On one occasion over Cobham Salt Lake he was doing this when the blanket blew out over my head and



The 'Flying Padre' with his plane, in which he visited his parishioners in a parish as big as England

nearly smothered me. I flew blind for a few seconds, and then kicked the front passenger-seat frantically, but with no response. Struggling to free myself I at last got rid of the thing. On landing I explained things forcibly. 'Didn't you notice me kicking your seat', I asked. Whereupon my cleric friend naively replied. 'I thought you meant "Take another snap"'.

Landing grounds in this country are many and varied. Some are larger and more perfect than any that England can show; others demand craft and cunning in order to avoid trouble. There are some wonderful natural landing grounds of the sun-baked claypan type already mentioned. Another type is the black river soil of the Darling which is inclined to be treacherous after rain. The Wilcannia aerodrome was necessarily of this latter type, and I often wondered what might happen should I be compelled to land on it after heavy rain. After three years' flying in the dry, I was caught by the rain at last. I had flown up-river to a wedding. There were heavy storms about. I had flown over the track where a car full of guests, including the 'best man', was bogged, and there was no place where I could land to pick him up. The car carrying the 'best man' never arrived, so the wedding proceeded without him. On the return journey I found to my dismay that a heavy storm had flooded the Wilcannia aerodrome ten minutes before I arrived. The 'drome looked like a lake and the townsfolk had all turned out to watch me somersault. Fortunately for me the water had not had time to soak into the hard surface, and on landing the plane merely splashed and jazzed on its wheels right up to its housing shed.

Some of those 'simple out-back' folk were very mystified by the plane. One asked whether the engine turned the wheels for the take off, and what was the propeller for? Another was so interested that he set to work to build a plane himself and made a really fine effort, though it never flew. Out West most things were referred to in terms of horses, and it was natural that the

Moth should be the 'flying horse'. Two big iron screws which I screwed into the ground to hold the wings secure against wind for the night brought forth the ejaculation 'Funny kind of 'obbles they use for them, Bill'. But all those fellows were most helpful in making things easier for me: improving landing grounds and erecting wind indicators (though usually the dust was my best indicator).

At times I would take a passenger duck-shooting or kangaroo-hunting. I remember once swooping down on two kangaroos in a paddock, and as I landed almost on top of them, my wing tip brushed over their heads. They appeared to be boxing, though really the larger one (a 'blue flier') was advising the 'Joey' for safety's sake to hop into her pouch. 'Joey', however, was far too entranced with the strange big 'bird'. I hopped out quickly to catch the 'Joey', but they were too fast for me and disappeared quickly into the scrub.

There was a time when I nearly lost my pilot's licence. It was at Menindie, one of the most important townships in my parish. I had a beautiful aerodrome there, and arriving over it, one Saturday, after one of those seldom but sudden rainstorms, found I couldn't get near it. So I landed in the township, pushed the plane into a yard for the week-end, and took off in the main street for home Monday morning. A few days later came a summons from the civil aviation authorities in Melbourne censoring me for my behaviour and threatening me with suspension of my licence if such a thing should occur again. The police had reported me. I fear I was not a very law-abiding parson. But then—who is, out West? The 'West' is a law unto itself. Men in many other professions are now using the plane in the bush: doctors, station-owners, insurance agents and politicians on their electioneering campaigns—all these have landed on my Wilcannia aerodrome, but I am proud to say that in this particular sphere the Australian Church, by adopting this most efficient and adventurous modern mode of transport, has led the way.

## Growing Wings

## Achievement

*Part of Mr. Filson Young's concluding talk on his flying experiences, and Captain Baker's comments on his pupil's progress*

**W**HEN I look back at my apprehensions and uncertainties of a month ago, and realise that yesterday, rather than continue to practise landings, I chose for a treat on my last lesson to climb myself up a mile into the air and fly about over London, studying the map in reality as I have so often studied it on paper, and seeing the whole course of the Thames from Hammersmith to the sea, and came back gliding down through the clouds to find the little green-and-yellow patch which is Heston—when I say that this is what I did for a treat, you will see how far I have come, and what Captain Baker has done for me in the time.

From the very first he inspired me with confidence in him. He showed an extraordinarily sympathetic sense of my nerves, and never tried me beyond my strength or endurance. He never failed to give me the treasured word of praise for anything I did well, and always found the reason, and an excuse, for what I did badly. He never failed, when I made mistakes, to show me how and why I made them. He carefully built up in me a sense of confidence in myself, a thing that physically I was in danger of losing. And finally (his only fault) he so treated me that however competent I may become, I feel that I can never know complete happiness in the air without his companionship and support.

Do I think it worth while to learn to fly at my age? The answer is, without any doubt: Yes—at any age. To people who feel themselves ageing and getting into rather settled armchair habits, I would say, 'Learn to fly and thereby make yourself ten years younger'. Even if you are not well endowed with this world's goods, take fifty pounds out of that provision you have made for a rainy day that may never come, and have a course of flying lessons. That sum should see you through at Heston, and half of it may be sufficient elsewhere. Even if you can't go on with it, flying will give you a sense of achievement that is worth while in itself. And looking at the people of all ages who have been learning with me, I can see that for them it has been concentrated health.

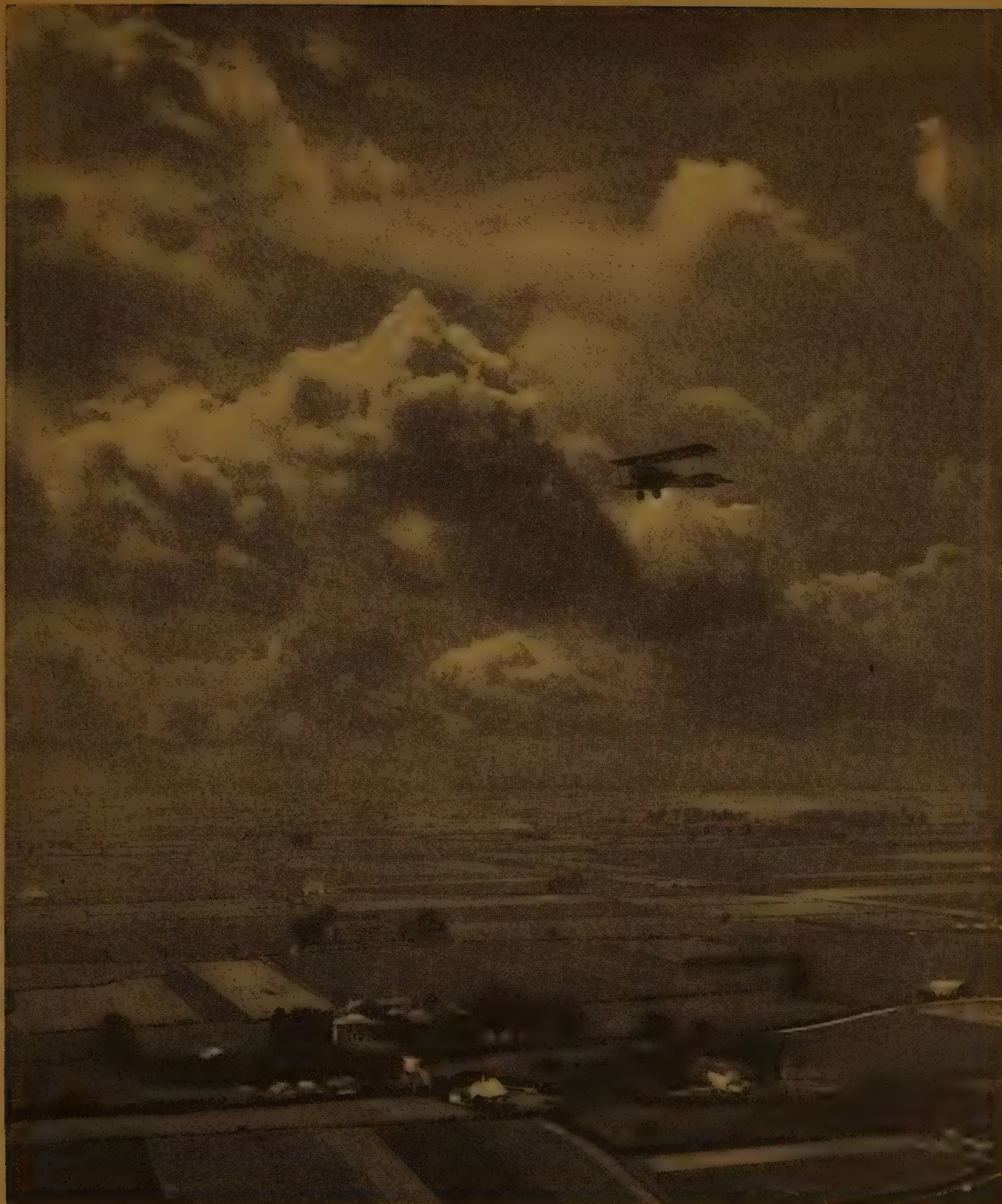
Is it difficult? Yes, in the sense that all effort, all learning of a new thing, is difficult. It requires perseverance and concentration. Is it easy? Yes, it is; or I should not have learned to fly in nine hours. You go on step by step, stage by stage. The first step is so simple, and the difficult end, of taking-off and landing the

machine yourself, seems so far away that it does not worry you. But if you have imagination, the shadow of the last stages lies across the whole of your course. Taking the machine off the ground is a delicate business. In no other vehicle, except an aeroplane, do you open up your engine full with a bang and charge straight off at your utmost possible speed. And yet I have found this part of it easy. I suppose the day will come when I find landing easy; but I doubt whether the day will ever come when I shall regard the last minute or two of a flight with anything but anxiety. The shadow of the landing lies across the whole of your path in the air. If only one could do the landing first and get it over, how delightfully perfect a journey in the air would be! But if every take-off is an enterprise (and it has ceased to trouble me), every landing, even if you have flown a thousand hours, is an adventure. I know how to do it, but I cannot be sure of doing it. I mean, I can get down on to the ground somehow, but I have by no means attained the judgment which makes for even the probability of a really good landing. Only time and practice can give me that.

FILSON YOUNG

HAVING DONE MOST THINGS, such as motoring, sailing, riding, etc., Mr. Filson Young was very quick at learning, and had a very useful knack of asking me questions which gave me an insight as to what was troubling him.

After the first two lessons he lost most of his initial nervousness and became thoroughly at home in the air. From this point he has jumped ahead with his lessons. Being a musician and expert yachtsman has given him a very soft pair of hands, with the result that his touch on the controls is beautifully light. This naturally has helped him enormously to get the feel of the machine. I should like to disillusion Mr. Filson Young on one point. In his first talk he seemed to imagine that I could not possibly know what he was feeling like, or thinking about, when we were up in the air. Well, he was wrong. For when people are learning to fly they are so busy concentrating and are so keyed up, that they entirely drop the mask which we all normally wear, and the instructor can almost feel what they are thinking about. For instance, on the occasion which Mr. Filson Young has described to you when he got lost over Staines, I could not see him from where I was sitting in the front seat, yet I was



*Photograph : Captain Alfred Buckham*

perfectly well aware from the feeling of the aeroplane that he was lost, and that he was probably perspiring in an effort to think, and that in a few minutes a plaintive voice would come down the speaking pipe telling me he was lost. And that is exactly what did happen.

I have found that the time taken by various people to learn to fly varies with their ages, the time increasing roughly with every fifteen years. The following are about the various periods: 15-30, 30-45, 45-60, 60-70. This I presume is due solely to the slowing down of the reactions between the brain and the body, yet it does not follow that, because a person takes longer to learn, he is not just as good a pilot in the end, and he is generally far more steady and reliable.

Mr. Filson Young is 58 years old and is well within the average of his division, *i.e.* 45-60—in spite of the handicap of a

too vivid imagination. And his touch on the controls is certainly smoother than most. I was positive that he would have obtained his licence before the end of these talks, but unluckily the weather during the last few lessons has been far too bumpy for much landing instruction. I am afraid he is a bit disappointed, as I know, in spite of what he has just said, he is itching to get me out of the aeroplane. Unfortunately we cannot control the weather.

During these talks, Mr. Filson Young has been very complimentary to me, and I can assure him I appreciate his remarks very much, especially as at times I had to strafe and bully him. But he took it all in good part, and if he has enjoyed his lessons as much as I have enjoyed teaching him, we are both quite satisfied.

V. BAKER

## Science Notes

# Lightning Discharges—Science and Present Needs

THE popular phrases 'greased lightning' and 'blazing the trail' have been given an enhanced significance through recent work in South Africa by Dr. B. F. J. Schonland and his colleagues. He has studied the development of the lightning discharge by taking and interpreting a large number of photographs of lightning flashes with a modification of the Boys lightning camera. This camera takes in a short time a very large number of photographs which can be examined at leisure later. The principle is that of the slow-motion film, but the technique is so good that events which take place literally with lightning rapidity can be slowed down to appear as events of normal life.

A thundercloud, it is known, can act as an electrical machine which generates a surprisingly small amount of electricity before discharging it to the ground at a very high voltage. The quantity may be only 20 coulombs—say the quantity which passes through an average electric lamp in about a minute—and this may be generated by the cloud in about 5 seconds. The voltage of the discharge, however, may be 5,000 million volts, and it is this enormous potential difference which causes the dazzling and destructive effects of lightning. The generator of power in the cloud is the wind, which blows up with great force vertically below it, like a gale roaring up a chimney.

The most usual type of lightning discharge seen in South Africa is also the most interesting. According to the photographic evidence the downward stroke of the discharge—from the negatively-charged cloud to the surface of the earth—is quite different from the upward stroke from earth to cloud. The first of the downward-moving strokes—the leader, or trail-blazer—is also quite different from the subsequent downward strokes. This first downward stroke travels from the cloud about fifty yards towards the earth, then its light fades away; the stroke seems to pause for about the ten-thousandth of a second; then the streamer goes downwards over the old track without showing much light but blazes forth as it enters fresh air. After about fifty yards of fresh air it pauses again for the ten-thousandth of a second. Then, as before, it resumes the blazing of a further fifty yards. In this step-wise fashion the main part of the discharge eventually reaches the ground—'eventually' occupying about a hundredth of a second—while part spends itself in the numerous and well-known branches which are characteristic of this kind of lightning. The instant the leader strikes the ground a brilliant flame sweeps upwards towards the cloud, retracing the main path blazed intermittently by the leader from the cloud, and chasing and overtaking those branches of the leader which had failed to reach the ground. There is no pause in this upward sweep; it takes only a few hundred thousandths of a second and is in consequence in marked contrast to the downward discharge. A cloud, it was found, may discharge itself by subsequent flashes to the first, but they also are in marked contrast to it. They appear in the photographs as continuously-moving dart-like flashes. The intermittent flashing downwards is always the very start of the discharge, never part of the later phenomena; the dart-like continuous flashes are always later, never at the start. Dr. Schonland has estimated the wave-lengths of the electro-magnetic radiation and the sound waves which should be produced by this new, intermittent, downward-moving leader of the discharge. They correspond with a ripple in many atmospherics and with the sound which is sometimes reported as accompanying a close discharge: that of tearing linen. These accompaniments are thus more intimately explained than they have been previously.

The time should soon be at hand for a good popular work on thunder and lightning. The weather and the upper atmosphere have recently been well done in this way, but lightning is unhackneyed. It is a subject which has atmosphere; it has in its canon some excellent stories of reasonable authenticity which sound strange at the first recount—on ball lightning particularly. The theories of its generation and discharge are

novel to most people and can be made very interesting; and the subject is one which may be superbly illustrated.

The only reading matter which has penetrated to the lonely spot in Cumberland where I write this is the current issue of *Nature*, containing a long, provocative and highly characteristic review on a book called *The Agony of Knowledge*. I have seldom read in an article more opinions on life, education, the future and the function of scientific societies, from which I differ than in this. But what attracted me to it was that the three books which, more than the book nominally in review, formed the staple of the reviewer's remarks are three I have just read, and that two of the three paragraphs quoted to serve as extended texts for the discourse happen to be the first two which I had copied into my notebook from these books before I left home. The first, from Mr. J. B. Priestley's *English Journey*, compares wistfully rather than unfavourably the care given to the upbringing of boys and girls in Coventry with the splendid attention given by their parents to improving young Double-Six-Daimlers. The second, from the essay at the close of Mr. Harold Nicolson's book on Lord Curzon, emphasises one aspect of the general complexity of life today. 'The present impotence of individual statesmen is not solely due to the rise of democracy, but must also be ascribed to the greater complexity, the increased inter-dependence, of the factors which they endeavour to mould. Mussolini is no less unfettered than was Cavour, Hitler is even more unhampered than was Bismarck. Yet their capacity for creative action is limited by the fact that no modern problem can possibly be self-contained. Human affairs are no longer manageable by a single individual will, nor can they be comprehended as a whole by any single human intelligence. They have outgrown the capacity of any individual brain. Statesmanship henceforward will have to be a corporate and not a one-man business'.

The reviewer's comments on this passage lead him to suggest that things in this country are at such a pass that the most eminent and learned body of scientists, the Royal Society, should now assume a responsibility for action that it never had, or, indeed, thought of having before. He thinks the Society would be the better for a general tidy-up first, but he seems satisfied that a reformed Royal Society could be really effective in the Commonwealth, not simply increasingly as a consulting but as an executive body. This view is merely one way of uttering a complaint, deep-seated among scientific workers, that it is wrong—a wrong to them, and wrong for the country—that in administration they should be so much out of it. The main complaint is a just one. It is one of the themes of Professor Julian Huxley's recent book on scientific research and social needs—but this suggestion about the Royal Society for setting things right is surely very poor. Why the Royal Society? Why, indeed, any scientific society? The future, it is becoming to be agreed, depends not on science, but on how science is used. All who have to do with science, and many others, are in this, not just a few eminent specialists who, outside of their special studies, have rarely shown they are more intelligent than anybody else. They are, of course, much abler, much more intelligent outside of their studies than other people, but many of them are temperamentally unable to make their intelligence effective, or get their abilities 'across'. They feel they have other things to do; they are, in fact, much too busy with their own work even to appreciate just what other workers in other fields are themselves doing. They are individualists when the real need is co-operation. They are in the main 'pure' scientists when what is required is application. Their interests are in the well-established branches of science when the saving studies are biology, psychology and sociology—and economics.

It is becoming increasingly realised that we have now sufficient technical knowledge and quite sufficient advice to be going on with. What is needed is to act up to our advice and to make real use of our knowledge. Emerson once wisely said, 'Our chief want in life is somebody who shall make us do what we can'.

A. S. RUSSELL

*Gauging Human Personality—IV**Glands, Food, and Personality*

By ROBERT SAUDEK

**T**EACHERS, when explaining the central nervous system to their pupils, usually compare it with the working of the telephone system of a great city. The various parts of the body are constantly sending their messages to the centre, which again transmits them to the terminal stations.

Similarly the working of the ductless glands in our body has been compared to the working of a broadcasting station\*. The messages transmitted through the central nervous system are meant first for the central exchange and then for that terminal receiving station which is supposed to react to them; while the messages which are sent out from a ductless gland are meant for the whole body. It is left to the receiving instruments to decide which of these numerous messages they are prepared to select, in the same way as it is left to listeners to switch on or off an item in the B.B.C. programme.

What now are these messages of the ductless glands? They are secretions of minute little bodies which, because they cannot find an outlet, are in some way or other absorbed by the body, and enter into its circulation. These secretions are called hormones. Their function is manifold. Some stimulate the whole body directly, others reduce the vitality of this organ or that, others again first brake and finally destroy another organ, some make us grow tall or short, fat or thin, lively or tired, bright or dull, passionate or frigid, geniuses or insane, sleepy or sleepless.

But the comparison of the central nervous system with a telephone system, and of the ductless glands with broadcasting, is not quite to the point. The two systems do not work so independently as the London Telephone Service and the B.B.C. do. Quite on the contrary, the hormones very often influence the nervous system, and the nervous system the secretions of the ductless glands. And the interaction of the two systems becomes more complex still, when diet enters into play. Though the new science of endocrinology (internal secretion) is still in its infancy, we certainly already know so much, that a correct choice of food may in many cases either make good for an insufficient secretion of this or that gland, or reduce its over-activity to normal dimensions.

We all now know that the universe is full of electric forces, that within and without our bodies, in the organic as well as in the inorganic world, electric charges are influencing, shaping and deciding everything, and we wonder how it could possibly come about that for thousands of years Man remained blind to those phenomena, and failed even to suspect the presence of those forces. In the same way it seems almost incomprehensible that the function of the ductless glands was not even suspected by research workers before May 31, 1889, the day on which the first report on experimental injection of sex hormones was presented to the Société de Biologie, when the science of endocrinology was born.

In the forty-five years which have since elapsed, thousands of experiments have been carried through in the laboratories of all parts of the world, the majority of them, of course, on animals. A wealth of facts have been discovered, and many of them seemed conclusively established until newly-discovered facts showed that even those 'final' claims had the validity of provisory findings only. The main problem is whether the new science has or has not yet succeeded in infallibly isolating the effect of each single hormone when working normally, too strongly, or too weakly; the 'normal' being somewhat different with each individual constitution.

There is, for instance, the thyroid gland in our throat. The only thing the ancients knew about it was that the malady of goitre was due to the swelling of the main thyroid gland. (Of the existence of a minor, the so-called parathyroid, gland they knew nothing.) For centuries it was generally believed that this gland had no particular task in sustaining life. When about sixty-five years ago the fact became known that all animals with removed thyroids soon died, nobody cared about this knowledge, and doctors went on removing the gland to cure their patients of goitre. Some of them survived, but

acquired diseases from which they had not suffered before. When children were operated upon, their mental and physical development was definitely stopped. On the other hand, artificial implantation of living thyroid tissues removed the symptoms of natural thyroid deficiency. This was established in 1889, but three years later it was shown that the administration of this gland substance by mouth did quite as well. And again, a few years later, there remained no doubt that the choice of a particular diet also greatly influences either the over- or the under-activity of the gland. Diet poor in vitamins makes the thyroid shrink. Excessive consumption of meat first increases its secretion, only to exhaust the gland soon afterwards. But also there is a greater activity of the thyroid during puberty and pregnancy.

Children born with thyroid deficiency, if not promptly treated, become cretins, the bones of the head are misshaped, the lips thick, the mouth open, the eyes dull, deaf-muteness is frequent, the nervous system remains undeveloped, feeble-mindedness and idiocy are the rule. The effects of an over-secretion of the thyroid are about the opposite. Where deficiency works as a brake on the normal development, abundance works for acceleration. Nervous and physical excitement increases, thought becomes dissociated, delusions and hallucinations occur, and even the senses of taste and smell may fail.

The pictures of both the wealthy and the poor in thyroid show the extreme, and fortunately rather rare, cases, while the number of those who are only slightly above or below the normal are much more frequent. They are not regarded as pathological, but rather as typical representatives of what we call types of temperament. Those slightly too rich in this particular gland are the lean or thin people, with an energetic, ever alert, emotional mind, brilliant eyes, thick and long eyebrows, somewhat over-sexed, quick and often sudden in taking decisions, and impulsive in their expressions. Some psychologists actually speak of a 'thyroid personality'. With advancing age the activity of the thyroid is slowed down, but whether old age is due to this loss of activity, or whether Nature works the other way round, we do not know.

To produce the hormones in the right amount, and at the right moment, the organism must be supplied with raw materials, chiefly the vitamins, contained in our daily food. In the absence of certain vitamins the individual can neither attain adult size, nor sexual maturity, nor protect himself against infections. Now, the same rule holds good for the deficiency of certain glands, so that the parallelism of the functions of glands and vitamins becomes evident. Almost certainly the vitamins act through the glands, and very probably disturbances in the glandular functions will one day be mainly treated by a change of diet. The American endocrinologist Dr. Louis Berman† goes so far as to write that 'no minor factor in the decadence of our time has been the denaturing of our food and the deprivations of an unbalanced diet'.

Quite near the thyroid are four tiny parathyroid glands, a pair on each side. When they are removed, muscular cramp soon follows, while as time goes on the growth of the skeleton is retarded. Some psychologists claim that deficiency of this gland also greatly influences character and personality.

The two pituitary glands are situated in the centre of the head, and weigh only ten grains. But they regulate our bodily growth, and can make us into a giant or a dwarf. Deficiency makes us grow fat, and in young individuals it arrests the development of sex. This is the reason why giants are bound to disappoint in married life. Here is an instance of the mutual inter-action between quite different sets of glands. The pituitary are more active before puberty than after. They stimulate the growth of the skeleton up to the time when the individual sexually matures; then the sex glands brake their activity, and we stop growing. Evidently there is a definite rhythm in the order and the intensity with which Nature meant those ductless glands to regulate and shape our personality. They function differently at various times, in the pre-natal stage, in infancy, adolescence, and maturity.

\* *The Tides of Life: Endocrine Glands in Bodily Adjustment.* By R. G. Hoskins. Kegan Paul. 15s.    † *Food and Character.* By Louis Berman. Methuen. 8s. 6d.

Of the effects of the pituitary secretion very little is definitely known so far. The pituitary produces a number, probably eight, different hormones, each of which can be either deficient or normal or excessive, so that as Dr. R. G. Hoskins states, the number of possible combinations of all the hormones amounts to 6,561. Now, only one of these represents a completely normal balance of all hormones. From this we may easily imagine the complexity of the whole problem. But even supposing, for argument's sake, that there were not such a mutual inter-relation of various hormones as there actually is, and supposing further that insufficiency and abundance always worked in opposite directions, what actual evidence is there of our correct interpretation of this principle when we apply it to sex? Is there such a thing as an objective standard by which to judge whether sex in an individual is normal, or abnormally strong or weak? With adults there certainly is not. And besides, even with satyriasis we cannot tell whether the abnormally strong eroticism is due to endocrine factors, as some authors claim, to nervous abnormality, or only to wrong social conditioning.

True, with adolescent subjects the situation is clearer. Here precocious sexual development represents what is called true hypergenitalism. But these cases, when carefully examined, show something quite different from what one would expect. With them the abnormally and precociously developed sex proves to be a secondary phenomenon due to over-activity of other ductless glands, e.g., the anterior lobe of the pituitary which has been mentioned already, and to the adrenal cortex and the pineal, of which more will be said later on.

With men and women alike, deficiency in sex hormones works for taller bodies, but psychologically the effect is more pronounced in women. As Dr. Rowe puts it: 'An insistently expressed egotism is the keynote of the hypogonard (under-sexed) character. The patient feels an active resentment towards a world that fails to appreciate her excellencies. Strong emotionalism and self-pity are united with acid criticism of others'.

The pineal gland is a small cone-shaped body attached to the brain, about one-third of an inch in length, and not quite one-fifth of an ounce in weight. Very little is so far known about its effect on our body and mind.

The thymus 'gland' lies above the heart, and consists of two parts, namely, the cortex and the medulla. Its chief function is to produce white blood-corpuscles. A few years ago the glandular character of the thymus was taken for granted, but in recent years many research workers have uttered strong doubts on this point. No conclusive evidence of its endocrine function has been presented so far.

The pancreas pours its secretion (insulin) direct into the alimentary tract. Where it functions deficiently, the sugar-illness, diabetes, is the consequence. The body cannot digest the

food in its original form, and is unable to break and to assimilate it to its needs. All symptoms of acute starvation arise. The patient starves in the midst of plenty. Since insulin can be artificially produced, and is within the reach of everybody's purse, diabetes nowadays need no longer be fatal or even injurious. But about the relationship between the other endocrine glands and the action of insulin little is yet known.

Of no endocrine gland have so romantic and exciting stories been told as of the adrenals, a pair of organs situated over each kidney. Both parts, cortex and medulla together, weigh not quite one-fourth of an ounce; but their loss means certain death. The cortex consists of the two fats which are also prominent in the brain. The two parts of the gland have been compared to a chocolate-covered cherry; when we cut it into two we find under the coating (cortex) in the middle a soft reddish substance (the medulla).

The hormone secreted by the inner part of this gland is called adrenalin. It was acclaimed as the emergency hormone, as the S.O.S. signal of human life, creating the state of the highest mental and bodily efficiency at the moment when both systems, the central nervous and the glandular, join forces to save our life during the tension of the highest emergency. When the adrenal glands discharge adrenalin into the body, the whole organism is reacting in all its parts. It is really like an S.O.S. broadcast all over the country, with everybody listening in. It can be easily understood that a little bit too much or too little adrenal activity must needs greatly contribute to the shaping of our personality in all its aspects of temperament, will-power, energy and emotionality.

When discussing racial psychology in the second article of this series, the part played by hormones in the shaping of personality was not stressed. As a matter of fact, this argument has hardly been advanced in the political controversy of our days. But since we know that the growth hormone of the anterior pituitary gland exercises a decisive influence upon the length of our body and limbs, it seems most probable that the Nordic owes his much-admired tall figure to the fact that the anterior lobe gland gradually emerged to dominance in his ancestral past. And similarly, adrenal deficiency often leads to a marked darkening of the skin and to bodily weakness. But whether it does so may depend on the strength of the other hormones, since some Negro tribes are notable for their physical strength. Such contradictory evidence has been advanced whenever the final isolation of the effects of the one or other hormone has been claimed.

In the present state of our knowledge, any definite claim about an absolute and unconditional relation between hormones and racial characteristics is premature. Endocrinological research moves in the right direction, but it is still far from its final goals.

## Some Talks and Talkers



'My Life Among the Wild Tribes'



'Romance in our Daily Lives'



'How We Should Keep Fit'

Drawings by Nicolas Bentley



Alleys of pleached trees at the far end of the long vista

Photograph: Edgar Ward

## Six English Gardens—III

*Hidcote: Garden Microcosm*

By RUSSELL PAGE

THE road from Chipping Campden twists for four miles through deep elm-shaded lanes until a sharp turn brings it, under a short avenue of limes, to the hamlet of Hidcote—a few cottages, farm buildings, and a small stone manor house, the uneven pastures round which Mr. Lawrence Johnston has turned into a remarkable garden—small, but in the grand manner.

The treatment of the lime avenue is interesting. There are wide grass verges and, under the trees, high loose hedges of holly. The cut grass and rather unusual association of limes and holly, though completely in character with the surrounding country, create a sense of excitement, pleasure and anticipation. Wide doors open directly from the road into a gravelled forecourt on the eastern side of the house. It is surrounded by the high stone walls of what were once farm buildings—on one side a barn, on another a fifteenth-century chapel and a cart-shed now become an orangery. All these walls are thickly planted with loosely trained trees and climbers. Especially good in summer is the rare *Schizophragma hydrangeoides* and its cousin *S. integrifolium*. Also there are figs and magnolias, abutilons and a fine plant of *Plagianthus betulinus*. Opposite the front door a stone mask drips into a stone-rimmed pool between two huge bay trees. The orangery windows stand wide open to show tumbled masses of exotic bloom, and clumps of lilies and low-growing shrubs further break the hard junction of gravel and wall. This irregular courtyard, boldly and simply treated, evokes by association the classic connections between house and garden. Like all the garden it is exquisitely humanised: Pliny would feel as at home here as at his villa on Lake Como; Hubert Robert and Fragonard would draw with pleasure a scene so similar to their eighteenth-century Italian studies.

The south front of the house is small and appears to have been refaced towards the end of the eighteenth century. It is

above, and barely thirty feet from, the lane. On one side a huge variegated silver holly overshadows this narrow strip of ground and provides the theme for a tiny formal garden. Four beds, edged with the low-growing variegated euonymus, are divided by cobbled paths. These beds are planted out in spring with silvery-mauve violas, and now with pink begonias and Earlam hybrid montbretias. In the centre of each is a standard silver-leaved centaurea. So unfashionable have variegated plants become, that many people would have destroyed the holly. Mr. Johnston, seeing the possibilities, has devised around it an original and charming garden in silver, green, and pinky orange.

The wall between this garden and the sunken lane has been lowered and made more architectural by two stone urns. Across the road a wide avenue of limes runs up a sloping grass field to a stone group placed on axis with the centre of the house.

So, by simple means, a sense of space has been given, and a tiny garden been prolonged into the open country. The view is reminiscent of the vista from above the Orangerie at Versailles looking across the Lac des Suisses to the woods of Satory. Though the scale is infinitely smaller, the proportions and the effect of exhilaration are the same.

It is, however, to the west of the house that Mr. Johnston has made the main gardens. The house itself plays no part in their plan. Only the roofs can be seen over the various hedges. A pleasantly shaped, but not enormous, cedar tree is the starting point for a long vista which runs from south to north right through the garden. This vista consists of a wide grass path linking various gardens divided from each other by hedges. Under the cedar tree it starts as a little lawn surrounded by thick squat hedges of box, then it passes between two wide flower beds. These are about 60 feet long by 25 feet wide. They continue in autumn a theme of pink established in



The long vista to the west, as seen from near the cedar tree

spring by thousands of pink and red tulips deeply planted, pink lupins, and the tall spires of *eremurus*. Now later pink star dahlias and snapdragons form a rosy foam from which rise bushes of the pink *Tamarix aestivalis* and an old-fashioned rose 'Prince de Bulgarie.'

From here high brick piers and wrought-iron gates guard the entrance to a round garden enclosed by heavy red-purple hedges of copper beech. Four paths from a circle of brick-framed lawn divide the ground under the hedges into four beds. These are planted with a rigid limitation and in bold masses to give a double succession of colour. Purple flag iris and the old-fashioned single mauve lilac *Syringa persica* are followed now by Munstead lavender, mauve campanulas, and above them masses of *ceanothus* 'Henri Defosse'.

To the left of this garden opens a vista of roses, yew hedges and water, while straight ahead are two long herbaceous borders, planted almost entirely in reds and oranges for late summer colour. Japanese maples and the dwarf mountain pine are clumped at intervals, as is *Berberis Thunbergii atropurpurea*, to subdue too much brightness and offer evidence of skilful and original planting. These borders are ended by a sharp rise in

the ground which necessitates a flight of steps, here of stone and flanked by a pair of charming pavilions. These are small and highly fantastic; brick-built with steeply pitched roofs and interiors tiled and gaily painted, they suggest in miniature all the mannered garden pleasures of the seventeenth century. Beyond them is a slightly raised lawn formally shaped and edged with brick, and on each side are alleys of pleached trees. Then come two elaborately-shaped beds filled with anchusa 'Brightest and Best', and finally wrought-iron gates leading on to a grassy plateau from which the Cotswold countryside spreads away to the summer blue of distant hills.

To the west of this main garden vista lies a whole series of small enclosures separated by hedges for shelter and surprise. Below the cedar tree are gardens specially for pæonies and phlox, and one for rare lime-hating subjects. It is extraordinary to see the growth made here by such things as *Rhododendron Grierson-*

*ianum* (a lovely late species with clear rosy coral flowers) and various meconopsis species in a soil which seems to be almost entirely very old, well-rotted sawdust.

From the circular mauve garden near the cedar, steps lead down to a square brick paved rose garden, each bed edged with box. Arches of yew open into a water-garden



Close-up view of the herbaceous borders in the long vista, and the stone pavilions

on a still lower level. Here, a round pool is large enough to fill its enclosure almost completely. It is raised two feet above the ground and its stone rim is close covered with ivy. After so much colour this circle of reflected sky framed in dark green is left without floral comment. Only a small leaden boy plays with the fountain jet. Beyond, steps lead up again to a green-hedged room—an eighteenth-century *cabinet de verdure*.

The second main cross vista is axed on the western pavilion. It is simply a wide grass walk with high hornbeam hedges at either side. It falls rapidly to a little stream and then climbs again to end far away in a *clairvoyée*—an iron grille between urn-capped piers. This whole device is in the best classic manner: it gives distance and size to a not enormous garden, and its plainness makes more coherent the intricacies of the various gardens which it separates. The stream which bisects it—invisible from either end—runs on each side through a wild garden where long drifts of shrubs and flowers, primulas, iris, senecios, funkias, lobelias and aconites, are, in their seasons, interwoven sheets of colour. In one place a whole bank is, in spring, solidly blue with *Anchusa mysotidiflora*, only broken by spreading clumps of *Euonymus alatus*, the best and smallest of the deciduous spindlewoods, crimson till the last leaf falls in late November. In this part of the garden, also, *Agapanthus umbellatus*, the Kaffir lily, seeds with unexpected freedom. Though generally seen in tubs in more formal surroundings, its lovely hyacinthine blue is very effective in the wild garden. Near here too are magnificent specimens of *Magnolia Wilsonii*, *Halesia tetraptera* and *Dipelta floribunda*, three of the best May flowering shrubs we have and all too seldom seen.

A newer part of the garden, wired for birds, shelters in odd but effective proximity long beds of various *Yucca* species, berberis, pheasants and flamingoes.

Behind the house to the North is a big lawn sheltered by a group of beech trees. Fine turf flattened for bowls and a surrounding yew hedge, swinging in a great curve to frame the beech clump, recall the highly sophisticated sylvan splendours of Bramham and Vaux-le-Vicomte.

At Hidcote, such a quiet green space must surely be the prelude to some elaborate display of colour or some unusually interesting collection of plants. It is. Mr. Johnston, delighting, as ever, in giving everything around him its highest decorative expression, has done enchanting things with all the plants usually concealed in white-painted greenhouses. His are not white and they are specially designed with a feeling for proportion which makes them worthy of so architectural a garden. In summer, the sides are all removed, exotic climbers ramp half in shade and half in the open sunlight; pots and tubs are hidden by masses of sub-tropical plants; sanded paths, pools for rare water-plants, raised stony beds for succulents, moraines for difficult alpinists and oleanders set about in painted tubs, all combine to make a very gay museum.

The soil at Hidcote is cold and unsympathetic. The site had no special advantages and was particularly bleak. Hedges planted for shelter are become green curtains defining the plan and separating different garden delights; changes in level, the excuse for those different patterns of light and shade which steps afford. The textures and qualities of plants and their cultural preferences have been as carefully considered as their colour values. A wide knowledge of garden history and design has enormously assisted a remarkable natural taste.

Highly eclectic, Hidcote presents, very compactly, an original synthesis of historic and contemporary garden. Dozens of different themes are picked up, given separate gardens in which to develop or run right through the place to link isolated incidents. Every feature—urns, seats, splashes of colour or special grouping of plants—is led up to very carefully so that, in its place, it seems inevitable and right.

Here is a separate garden world—a leafy commentary on European civilisation, and, at the same time, a storehouse of ideas for every kind of gardener.

Hidcote is open to the public on September 12.



Box-garden and water-garden, with yew hedges

Photographs taken for THE LISTENER by Edgar Ward

## Photographic Competition

THE OUTSTANDING FEATURE of the photographs in the Industry Group of our Competition was—there is no other word for it—*dullness*. That industrial subjects are sufficiently interesting to attract photographers is proved by the large number of entries for this group, but in few cases was either choice or treatment of subject very happy.

Until recently the industrial scene has almost invariably been irrefutably ugly in its external manifestations and accordingly unless the artist-photographer has that rare talent which can successfully exploit 'the beauty of ugliness' he is well advised to look for his subjects amongst the severe economical beauties of well-designed and efficiently working machinery and those more recent industrial buildings which are planned on the same principles as the machinery they house. But industrial subjects, even at best, probably call for more imagination and skill than any other kind of representational photography; imaginative treatment might well be applied, we feel, to industrial subjects much more than it is at present—this would be merely a logical extension of the principles already admitted in architectural photography (which, of course, includes the photography of factories from the strictly architectural point of view). The less the 'human interest' and 'association value' of a subject, the greater is the imaginative effort called for in order to produce a good and significant picture, while, on the other hand, the imagination has to be sternly controlled if the picture is to have any value as a record. There is great scope for improved industrial photography in connection with technical and semi-technical publications, whose illustrations at present exhibit a deadly monotony and dreariness which must be lamented even by the most mechanically-minded or prosaic of readers.

The first prize goes to H. Emmett, whose photograph, 'Power', seems to succeed both in recording accurately a piece of machinery and in suggesting many of the implications of the word 'industry'. It is also attractive to look at, regarded simply as an arrangement of shapes and textures, and is an efficient piece of workmanship. We reproduce also 'Unloading Timber in Bristol Harbour', a picture by Sydney Davies, a straightforward industrial scene photographed from a pleasant angle.

Other photographs, many of them excellently taken, of such subjects as village craftsmen, seemed to concentrate so exclusively on human elements that they were more in the nature of character studies than illustrations of 'industry' in a wide sense.

### Next Week's Subject—Scientific

This subject should reach THE LISTENER office by August 24 and the prize-winning photograph will be published in our issue of September 5. The rules of the competition are as follows:

1. The competition will end on August 31.
2. A different subject is set for each week and entries should reach THE LISTENER office between the Monday and Friday of that week (inclusive). The prize-winning photograph in each subject group will be published on the Wednesday week following the closing date for that group. Entries submitted at any time other than during the week for which they are intended will not be considered.
3. A prize of Ten Guineas is offered for the best photograph in each group. The Editor reserves the right to reproduce non-prize-winning photographs at the following rates:
 

|            |                         |
|------------|-------------------------|
| Whole page | Two Guineas.            |
| Half-page  | One-and-a-half Guineas. |
| Minimum    | One Guinea.             |

The above sums, as also the prize-money, will purchase the first British rights of reproduction.

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6. No photograph may be entered for the competition which has previously been published elsewhere.

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8. The decision of the Editor is final, and no correspondence can be entered into with regard to his judgment.

9. Parcels or envelopes containing entries must be marked 'LISTENER Photographic Competition', and the Editor cannot accept responsibility for photographs lost in transit.

### Final Subject

9. Wireless—to include photographs of any aspect of this subject

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'Unloading Timber in Bristol Harbour', by Sydney Davies



'Power', by H. Emmett

# Microphone Miscellany

*Some extracts from recent broadcast talks*

## Disturbance in Cork

*Broadcast on August 15*

WHEN I ARRIVED in Cork yesterday evening, things outwardly were quiet, and the only sign of excitement was the eager way everybody was rushing to buy the evening paper. I then met a prominent person in the farmers' movement. He had a band of sticking plaster over his head and he looked as if he could give me the local colour. But one has to be careful when in search of truth; feeling is running very high and almost everybody is a partisan of one kind or another. But my friend made one thing clear: the trouble in this case is not about rates, but about annuities. These annuities are the death charges that a farmer pays on the money he had lent to him to buy his land. The farmers, in Cork at least, are doing their best to pay their rates, for which they see the value in local services, but annuities are a different matter, and here they are offering organised resistance—and, mind you, as past experience has shown, the Cork farmers are a tough crowd; hard workers and hard fighters, thrifty and tenacious, rather a formidable combination. Moreover, as the last election showed, the city and county are strongly Blue Shirt. They made no bones about it; they would offer stubborn resistance against the payment of these annuities.

'Why', said one man to me, 'we have already paid them annuities twice over; first in penal duties, again in the depressed prices'. 'Look at my case', said another. 'I bought a yearling two years ago for £7. Today he is fat, and the best price I can get is £7 10s.' Another said: 'I might pay if I could only get a licence to export my few fat pigs, but I cannot ship them, as home prices are ruinous. No, until I can, at any rate, sell my stuff at the best of the ruling bad prices, it is unfair to ask me to pay what I have already paid indirectly and what, in any case, I cannot afford'.

This is the farmers' case, and it has led to the formation of a new organisation known as the Land Annuities Defence Association, an organisation pledged to pay no annuities till, as the cry goes, 'we get our markets back'. This body is distinct from the old Farmers' Union which two years ago merged with the Cosgrave party, and it contains, I am told, a number of Mr. de Valera's supporters, and is spreading, as such organisations which have something to offer are inclined to do.

Last Monday's trouble was quite like a revival of the old land agitation days—the days of Captain Boycott and evictions. The setting was different, but the temper was much the same. Actually, what appears to have happened was a batch of seized cattle were being offered by auction. The farmers from a great distance round came to protest, and a number of uniformed police and armed detectives were present. It appears that only selected members of the public were allowed into the sale yard. This enraged some of the objectors, and they drove a lorry through the protecting cordon of police, knocked down a superintendent, smashed through the gate in among the cattle pens. Armed police opened fire. The farmers say it was a case of panic, and the use of fire-arms against the lorry-load of unarmed farmers was quite unjustified. This shooting has certainly made people angry and jumpy, and the whole business has now assumed a political flavour. General O'Duffy and Mr. Cosgrave attended the funeral of Lynch, the unfortunate victim. Blue Shirts were present in large numbers. There was great manifestation of grief by the public, and all this stirring of emotion does not make things any easier.

As you may realise, the task of the Government in such circumstances is no easy one. Apart from the money involved, which it badly needs, it must, of course, assert the law. It says the farmers have no grievance because the amounts given in export bounties, subsidies and remission of annuities—for remember, these annuities are only half what they were—is far more than it has ever collected in penal duties. To which the farmer replies: 'You may be right on paper; some classes of farmers may be no worse off; but grass farmers are, many of them, "broke", and can only pay if they sell their means of livelihood—like a workman selling his tools'. It is a big thing to coerce the countryside, but it must be done if the law is to rule.

The Government says Mayo and other counties—in fact, the poorer farmers—can pay, and on this account not a few begin to wonder how much the opposition is political and how much

economic. The late Kelvin O'Higgins once said: 'When the bailiff cannot function, civilisation has gone by the board'—and this is the key to the struggle at this moment.

SIR JOHN KEANE

## At Radiolympia

THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT in my mind that we have this year the best cabinet work—artistically, mechanically and acoustically—ever shown at the Radio Exhibition, and, a further point, a more typically British show than in previous years.

As very much a member of the listening public, I see very few radical improvements, but a great deal of steady progress in efficiency without extra cost, the generally higher standard of the quality of reproduction and, perhaps most notably, a step forward in reliability. On one of the stands you can see radio sets being put through their reliability tests. Here is a tray loaded with radio sets which are being jolted and jerked to such an extent that in about fifty minutes they pass through the ordeal of a railway journey from London to Glasgow and in a very few hours they suffer indignities to their frames equivalent to a railway journey around the world—at least, so I was told. The upshot of this is that the manufacturers are no longer afraid of that old bogey of theirs—'after-sales service'. They are making instruments that will last, and they are not afraid to subject them to public tests on this score.

I do not know how long it will be before we can all afford to change our radio sets and radio-gramophones for one or other of these 1935 models, but I do know that with modern standards and conditions—not to mention the coming of Droitwich—we shall have to change them as soon as possible for the sake of the necessary selectivity. This selectivity business is one that we can all appreciate, and I think you would be as delighted as I am to see that practically all the new models have got some scheme or other for showing us how to tune in correctly, to get absolutely the best results from any station that we want. They show with arrows of light on little dials, or 'neon tuning', as it is called, exactly when the knob has been turned to the right position. This seems to me the most sensible concession to our human failings that the radio industry has given for some time.

There is very little promise of television—that is to say, it is not being thrust upon us as the sensation of this year's exhibition, nor, I think it is fair to say, has car radio, or radio sets intended to be included in motor-cars or made part of the standard design on motor-cars. Clearly this is a thing which will increase in popularity gradually, and no doubt British manufacturers will know how best to cater for the motor owner who wishes it installed, as it has already been installed almost universally in the States.

What else shall I tell you about? Well, I suppose that if you go to Olympia you will be attracted, as everybody else is, to the stand which has the toy railway. This is a most fascinating and ingenious show. A maze of railway lines is marked at regular intervals by well-known broadcasting stations, the names of which are also on a big dial overhead. By turning the knob on the front of this huge table—one can point an arrow on the dial to any desired station, say Stockholm. The station lights up on the toy model and the train—wherever it may be—starts its journey till it comes to that station. I needn't tell you what fun this is and what competition there is to get near the tuning dial which directs the game. Perhaps I should explain that this is meant to demonstrate the extraordinarily accurate tuning demanded by the selective sets of today, but I expect a great many visitors will miss the moral in their enjoyment of the game.

Another development concerns radio-gramophones only, and it is very interesting. There are at least two different kinds of radio-gramophones which play records on both sides, as distinct from the automatic record changer which deals with only one side of each record in the pile. (Nowadays, either the machine turns the record over itself, or it has two pick-ups, each of which plays one side, and with the use of these labour-saving devices, a further stage in laziness of the 'gramophile' is reached.) I should like to make special mention of the 15-valve radiogram to which the delightful name of 'high-fidelity' is attached. This

quite definitely puts the standard of reproduction in a commercial outfit a very clear step higher than anything hitherto obtained, at a price which would have been considered low a few years ago, though it is now one of the most expensive instruments—as it should be—in the exhibition. Among so many handsome and brilliantly efficient instruments in this really wonderful exhibition, I think this 'high-fidelity' model can claim to be the most perfect adaptation of up-to-date research to up-to-date needs.

CHRISTOPHER STONE

## *A Miserable Day in Derbyshire*

I HAVE JUST COME BACK from a couple of days in one of the Derbyshire dales. Never in my life have I been so nearly driven mad by noise. I do not mean country noises; I heard too few of them. I mean the roar of the motor-bike belonging to the young man staying at the farm, which persisted half last night when he was tuning up the engine, and half today when he was riding madly up and down the valley road. I mean the noise of the portable gramophone belonging to the gentleman who picnicked at the roadside, and played the same two records over and over again all the afternoon. I mean the noise of the wireless set fitted in the car of the gentleman who parked by the waterfall, and drowned the sound of falling water with an amplified loudspeaker. The young men and women in shorts who marched from the village station with arms linked, singing out of tune, did not spoil my day for me. They dispersed

over the countryside and were soon forgotten. But these owners of mechanical instruments and roaring engines did.

It is a curious thing that the country people do not mind this as much as townspeople do. I had an argument about it with a man in a village pub. He turned out to be a stonewaller—one of the men who build and repair those wonderful grey walls without mortar which surround all the fields up here in the north. He said he didn't mind noise; what got on his nerves was the way holiday-makers scrambled their way over his stone walls, displacing stones and weakening copings, until finally a repair job became necessary on a wall that might cost five shillings a square yard to build.

This is a practical trouble. Noise is an æsthetic one. Surely both ought to be dealt with. There has long been a campaign against litter, and there are signs that it is beginning to take effect. I find myself asking, after a day in the most beautiful part of England, whether we cannot hope to have the countryside undisturbed and peaceful as well as clean. You may find it difficult to believe, but I once saw, near one of the footpaths leading to Kinder Scout, a group of young men, two of whom were carrying rattles such as football supporters wave at a Cup Tie. The noise of those rattles is akin to that of a machine gun. From time to time, the young men would wave them and make the hills resound. That was a queer incident which I suppose may never be repeated. But nevertheless, it seems to me in a way symbolical—a wanton piece of urban noise-making in the quiet country. I felt it would be a good thing if, when we go to play in the country, we were to leave our rattles at home.

E. R. THOMPSON

## *The Frustration of Medicine*

(Continued from page 302)

toxæmia', and indeed the infection of many 'tracts' of the body, with cultures of *Bacillus bulgaricus*, and (ii) the surgical removal of the large bowel. The former, as being easy, ran riot through medical practice; the latter, as being difficult and costly, was less resorted to, but none the less it had its classical protagonists. Despite the cost, the pain, and the subsequent inconvenience, it was quite fashionable to have the large intestine removed.

How much do we hear of such treatments today? It is true that a few food faddists still bother about *Bacillus bulgaricus*\*, but the medical profession have almost dropped using it as they have dropped many other fashionable remedies. Surgical removal of the large bowel is no longer a fashion even among the idle rich. It is safe to say that no such treatments would ever have had the slightest chance of emergence were medical men thoroughly trained in scientific method and recruited according to ability rather than to private possessions. And the end of the trouble started by Metchnikoff is only just in sight. Toxæmia as the result of stasis of the colon—though long denied by exceptional men like Hurst—is now at length being discovered after nearly forty years to be a chimæra.

### *Commercial Exploitation*

Now, although medical research is not exploited rapidly enough by the medical practitioner, it is industriously exploited by commerce. Is a new hormone or a new vitamin announced, then at once there appears on the market a preparation guaranteed to contain the active principle and, with all the power that advertisement backed by irresponsible wealth can supply, that preparation is foisted upon a credulous public. Commercial firms employ graduates in medicine and in science to keep their eyes upon research literature to see if there be anything in the way of hormones, vitamins, etc., which can be turned to commercial advantage in the form of patent medicines and foods. The advertisements which back these preparations are couched in language which can deceive any but the expert and often does deceive the general practitioner. While the State allows the commercial exploitation, in the form of patent foods and medicines, of medical research, that research will be frustrated.

It is not asserted, of course, that all patent medicines and all patent foods are frauds by any means. Many put up by reputable firms are useful. But when it is realised that many of the foods consist of common flour, or of cornflour, with a dash of vitamin or of added mineral matter, or both, or that much of

their value as a good depends upon the milk which the public is advised to add in the preparation of the food, it is seen that so long as the law as regards patent medicines and foods is what it is, undoubtedly valuable scientific medical research becomes discredited either because of its apparent inefficacy or because of the taint of quackery. In other countries the social conscience has been aroused by these nostrums and they are allowed on the market only under stringent conditions as regards publication of contents and reasonably worded advertisement†. This is a step in the right direction, but it is questionable if any commercial firm ought to be allowed to exploit medical research, particularly research carried out under public auspices, for such exploitation leads to frustration of such research.

### *Organisation to Ensure Health*

There remains one final point. Though medical research shows us what we ought to do in certain conditions, the distribution of wealth is so uneven that those who should be receiving the treatment indicated cannot afford it. The most glaring instance is that of diet. Medical research has shown that the addition of a pint of milk per day to the diet of a growing boy improves the growth rate, the physique, the power of resistance to disease, and the mentality out of all proportion. The production of milk in Great Britain, one of the best fitted in the world for dairy produce, is so badly organised that there is *not one pint per head of the population even if we could get it to them*. And even if we could get it to them the majority could not afford to pay for it. One pint of milk per day costs at the least 1s. 9d. per week, and even were public assistance up to 3s. per week per child to be granted, there would be but little balance left for other foods than milk, for clothing, lighting, and shelter! A committee of the British Medical Association estimated that at the prices current in June, 1933, and purchasing in the cheapest market, no 'man' could be fed in a tolerable and healthy way for less than 5s. 10½d. per week. This country refuses to organise itself to ensure such a niggardly amount to all its members. It must suffer the consequences. Until it is so organised most of the striking advances in medical science are doomed to frustration.

Professor Mottram's article is part of a chapter he has written for a book entitled *The Frustration of Science*, to which Sir Daniel Hall, J. G. Crowther, J. D. Bernal, Dr. Enid Charles, Dr. P. Gorer and Dr. B. Woolf are also contributing (to be published in the autumn by Allen and Unwin).

\* In fact there is a well-known cheese with this microbe 'in active form' still on the market, and the writer by chance had some of it today for lunch.  
† To obtain legislation to enforce such conditions needs a desperate fight, as has recently been seen in the U.S.A.

## Points from Letters

Owing to the pressure upon its space, THE LISTENER is able to publish only a selection from the correspondence which it receives. Correspondents are asked to write briefly and to the point, and are reminded that name and address must always be given, even where their publication is not desired. THE LISTENER, of course, undertakes no responsibility for the views expressed in these columns. Preference will be given to letters which do not employ a *nom-de-plume*

### 'Twenty Years Ago'

I feel that by the production of Professor Temperley's symposium, 'Twenty Years Ago', a most effective means has been taken to combat what Sir Raymond Beazley calls 'this theory of exclusive, horrible, unprecedented German war guilt—of a Germany ceaselessly plotting, immediately causing, and brutally conducting, a savage and treacherous attack against unprepared, unsuspecting innocence'. Few informed persons, especially since the publication of the documents from which this narrative was compiled, would give credence to such an extravagant and obviously propagandist view. To those men and women, however, who have not the opportunity for a thorough study but who have ideals of citizenship and wish to form sane opinions and exercise a balanced judgment within the limits of their knowledge, the plan of letting the facts speak for themselves must have been of considerable value.

What the facts showed was a local quarrel developing into a European war. According to the theory, this was due to the deliberate machinations of Germany, who 'encouraged a sub-servient ally to declare war against Serbia'. 'Twenty Years Ago' leads us to believe that it was due far more to Russia's action in backing Serbia and ordering mobilisation and to the consequences of the scheme of alliances, with the Kaiser's mistrust of Russia as a powerful subsidiary influence. There seems to have been little alternative for Austria between war and the risk of disintegration. The reported utterances of M. Pašić, after the Balkan Wars, 'The first game is won: now we must prepare for the second, against Austria', and of Hartwig, Russian Minister at Belgrade, about the same time, 'Turkey's business is finished; now it is Austria's turn', reveal a direction in Serbian policy which constituted, in the words of Franz Josef, 'an enduring peril for my house and my possessions'. But this Austro-Serbian issue need not have involved all Europe. It might have been localised in the Balkans, though this was improbable. More likely, it might have been confined to the directly interested Powers. The forces of Pan-Slavism and of the Central Powers could have fought it out without bringing in France or England. Only, as the broadcast showed, there existed these alliances and understandings to broaden the basis of the struggle. M. Sazonov 'referred to the technical impossibility of suspending the war measures' and gave us to understand that the military machine had already taken charge of the situation. And the Kaiser, in all sincerity, exclaims that 'the sword has been forced into our hands'.

The theory will not fit the facts, of course. 'Twenty Years Ago' could not show us Germany striving to bring about war, as the propagandists would once have us believe. It did help us to appreciate how the Great War really had its inception—a war which most feared but for which all were determined to be prepared.

Barnes

L. J. DREW

### Peace and Security

Although I am obliged to Mr. Boulter for having pointed out the overstatement of my case contained in the word 'often' in connection with 'nations', it is unnecessary for the purpose of my argument to discuss the causes of all past wars. It is enough for me to know that, on the eve of the Great War, the danger of German invasion was thought serious enough for our Government to consider the retention in England of two out of the six Expeditionary Force Divisions. That is an historical fact and not 'a familiar fiction'. And there can be few, even among the pacifists, with presumption enough to assert that in this respect history will not repeat itself. On the contrary, I still maintain that we may be liable to attack unless we are sufficiently prepared to resist it.

Chalfont St. Giles

ALEXANDER GORDON  
(Lieut.-General)

I think your correspondent, Lieut.-General Gordon, should carry his argument a little further and show why any armed nation would wish to attack a disarmed Great Britain, or in what way the 'evil instincts in human nature' would be satisfied by such an attack. Surely the last War proved conclusively that in the present

economic order, both sides lose. Accepting his argument that a weak nation (from an arms point of view) would provoke a war by inviting attack, why is it we are not at war now? Surely there is a nation somewhere vulnerable. Or we have only to provide ourselves with more armaments, and we should then have more nations provoking a war by being 'incapable of defending' themselves.

Nottingham

L. F. GLADWELL

Lord Raglan, in his review of Dr. Delisle Burns' book *War*, accuses the author of being illogical. But what could be more illogical than the arguments produced in the attempt to prove this? 'Peace depends upon justice', says Lord Raglan quite truthfully, but then he continues to show that justice consists of the usually immoral use of force and stops short there. But the matter must be pursued further, for the immoral use of force is lawlessness, which is anarchy, which from experience both in the present and the past is most definitely not conducive to peace. Let Lord Raglan start again and revise his ideas about justice. At present he does not even know the meaning of the word, but Dr. Delisle Burns does.

Hampstead

DONALD M. SMITH

### Should the League of Nations Arm?

As a citizen of Switzerland and as a cosmopolitan, I consider it my duty to contend the idea of an armed League of Nations. The policy by which the League of Nations Union is attempting to revive the League made by the victors, therefore and thereby without any moral authority, is reactionary and anti-civil. Of course, the Covenant can be altered: as Professor Gilbert Murray says, it is very elastic and can be cut loose from the Peace Treaties. And these could be revised, but they fail to see that a League of Governments who keep armaments cannot have authority, for the very reason that would be a sanction of the institution of brigandage, which no documents, no blessing by Popes or Bishops can make sacred. It is a stupid criminality.

Let me add this, in defence of my character: in 1915, writing to the Editor of *War and Peace*, I said, 'If Great Britain means to keep the British Empire by might it will fall, but it could and ought to be kept united by moral force'.

Now I say that the Covenant must be remade and proclaim the general and total disarmament, and that all nations ought to turn their soldiers into disarmed police, teachers of the new law, commercial travellers and land workers.

Hampton

A. MUTTI

### The Royal Academy

It is a great tribute to the universal assumption that the Royal Academy is an integral part of the British Constitution that none of your correspondents have challenged its right to exist at all, or have tackled the fundamental question of whether such institutions have any value whatever. In the absence of any controversy on this primary question, which might have been really interesting, it is obvious that the writers have not considered for a moment what the Academy actually is. It is a group of working artists, perpetuated by and from themselves, and holding an annual exhibition of their own works, in their own gallery. That it permits a large number of outside artists to participate freely in this exhibition, that it carries on an important school and has other activities, to which Mr. Lamb modestly referred, are only evidences that in addition to its personal functions it has always had most commendable social aims.

Keeping therefore in mind what the Academy really is—this group of working artists—what do the critics expect? From the tone of their letters it is apparent that the level of the personnel is held to be very low, yet a degree of altruism is demanded from the members quite inconsistent with this premise. Is it reasonable to expect from a body of elderly artists, making their living by art, with their own standards, technical and otherwise, that they should provide 'a laboratory, even a nursery . . . for experimental art', or 'some new standards of merit', or 'work

... even though it may seem at first sight over-vigorous or even unpleasant? Your critics are admirable in their faith in the idealism of human nature—in other people.

Another notable point in the correspondence is the continual reference made to the public and its alleged thirst for art, even for novelty in art. I have never thought of the public, 'general' or otherwise, being at all interested in art. But if I were giving evidence of the 'public's' interest, I think the best example procurable would be the crowds that still go to Burlington House after 166 years of annual exhibitions. Professor Talbot Rice makes a point that these exhibitions 'are in no way seething with interest or excitement as they should be, and undoubtedly would be, were they representative of what the general public wants'. Surely this again belongs to the naïve realm of great expectations. I am afraid that the public referred to by your correspondents are the coteries of critics and aesthetes to be found in the absolutely exclusive exhibitions of the 'Unit I', or the 'Seven-and-six' type (these numerals are so confusing), who would all die if they saw a straightforward accomplished piece of painting on the holy walls.

Mr. Editor, I am not defending Academies from constructive criticism—I know their shortcomings too well—but far from being surprised at their failings I am astonished that at their age they are not worse. And, to give away the whole secret of their weakness, the perpetual trouble is that the best artists are usually those who take the least interest in the affairs of a corporate body. Have your correspondents any remedy for this?

Edinburgh

DAVID FOGGIE

There is something delightfully refreshing, for a generation deluged with tendentious literature, in the simple affirmations of Mr. Lamb in his article on 'What the Royal Academy Stands For'. There is no suspicion of the harassed warrior in defensive posture that one might have expected of a champion of the Royal Academy. Rather than *advocatus diaboli*, he comes as the messenger of the gods, unruffled and condescending. To this he adds the coy insularity of the Academician. Thus he speaks of the Royal Academy as a 'thoroughly British institution'—an institution, in fact, based largely on the model of the French Academies of a hundred and fifty years before. And, indeed, if we indict the Royal Academy, it is that we are also impugning the whole brood of academies. Their self-satisfaction, their exclusion of genius, and their failure to respond to the art of their period have become a legend. So it is that the words of Pierre Lanfrey on the French Academy are so fitting to our own. 'Directed in everything by petty considerations and wasting all its energy in childish tournaments, in which the flatteries that it showers on others are only a foretaste of the compliments it expects in return for itself . . . it sees in taste not a sense of the beautiful but a certain type of correctness, an elegant form of mediocrity'.

Great art is often received with more violent abuse than praise, but it creates excitement; even the polite curiosity that takes people to the Academy exhibitions yearly would fail were it not that many a suburban home would lose its social cachet if some member of it did not visit a function whose opening is a landmark in the London season.

Finally, Mr. Lamb tells us that if some distinguished artists have not been Academicians, 'the reason in many cases is a refusal to stand for election'. What could be more explicit?

London, W.C. 1

NEIL MACLAREN, Jr.

### Is the Negro Our Superior in Art?

I find it difficult to appreciate Mr. Stevens' line of reasoning, in your issue of April 18, for his extraordinary conclusion in the last sentence that 'the Negro is our superior in the arts today.' I have studied and practised drawing all my life and I have Seth Boapea's illustration to Miss Perham's article before me as I write. Its suitability and decorative value to such an article is undoubted. As a 'very beautiful drawing', to quote Mr. Stevens, I would not give it house-room even granting that it has lost something in reproduction. For a person of education to reach such a conclusion seems to me peculiar to say the least of it just because a few small boys at Achimota College possess an inborn sense of form. Has Mr. Stevens studied the works of our own infant prodigies shown at the exhibitions of recent years in England?

Admitting that the Negro has certain potentialities, after some years out here I have found that he is our superior in no arts or crafts whatsoever and that his aesthetic sense and appreciation of such is infinitely inferior to our own.

Nigeria

J. S. OLIPHANT

### 'Value' of the Victorian Artists

In 'Week by Week' you refer to the reversals of fortune which certain Victorian artists have suffered, as evidenced by the prices realised by the pictures at recent sales. You should, I think, in justice to other Victorian artists, have mentioned the prices realised at recent sales by the pictures of Burne-Jones and the pre-Raphaelites which show that their star is rising again. The fact seems to be that the public admires a good thing (or a new thing if told often enough that it is good) when 'he' sees it. Frith alone, of the poor artists you mention, figured in the Exhibition of British Art early this year. It is largely a question of 'Out of sight, out of mind' and 'Follow my leader' in art with the great B.P.

Headington

ERNEST S. THOMAS

### Is There Too Much Formal Education?

Mr. Douglas Woodruff's comments on the distressingly poor results obtained by our so-called 'mental gymnastics' must strike a familiar chord in many teachers and would-be teachers. One is constantly seeing or hearing of the really considerable ingenuity, resourcefulness and patience shown in the pursuit of a hobby by boys whose performance in the classroom is most discouraging.

The important connection between interest and the amount of mental energy developed is one of the points repeatedly emphasised by that great pioneer, Edward Thring. 'Great interest will make up for lack of time: create great interest' is one of his trite sayings. (Incidentally he propounds for every teacher the motto, 'If the boys don't learn, it's my fault', which somewhat heroic maxim he first set before himself when teaching as a young man in an elementary school in Gloucestershire.) Since any attempt to emphasise the disastrous results of dulness in education is apt to be met by the accusation that one is anxious to make things soft, in a manner characteristic of this degenerate age, it is well for us that Mr. Woodruff's point has been pungently expressed by an eminent Victorian whose genius as a practical teacher is beyond dispute. One more quotation: 'If a boy does not understand what his work is about or what it has to do with his life, he *cannot and will not work*'. Italics mine.

Uppingham

A. R. BURN

The education prevalent from primary school to university today is dominated by book-learning. It was modelled on the old Public and Grammar School systems, which can be traced to the mediæval monastic seminaries. Hence the national system of education today descends from the old vocational education designed for training clerks in holy orders. The present system is admirably suited to produce excellent clerks of all types, but the defenders of it forget that in the Middle Ages there were all types of other vocational studies—for apprenticeships, military and legal careers, etc.

Today handicrafts should have the same status as book-learning. Drama, too, should come into its right place in the curriculum, and art should penetrate all subjects. Our present education is far too formal for the average boy and girl.

East Grinstead

HOWARD J. WHITE

### 'Extra-Sensory Perception'

In his excellent article in your issue of July 25, on Dr. Rhine's investigations into Extra-Sensory Perception, Dr. Russell draws attention to the fact that psychical researchers have for the most part been content with the collection of evidence, each individual researcher starting *ab initio* on every separate investigation. This has long been a cause of complaint against psychical research. It is said that the workers refuse to build on foundations laid by other men, they will not utilise the results of other investigators.

The charge is in the main true, but I think that there are, perhaps, reasons for this attitude which, even if they do not justify it altogether, at least mitigate it largely. First, the facts themselves are so surprising, so far from our ordinary conceptions of the fitness of things and—what weighs more with those of a scientific temperament—so upsetting to many of our accepted principles and theories. Second, until Dr. Rhine published his results very little work had been done on sound experimental lines. It is true that there have been numerous experiments in telepathy and clairvoyance but these have not been devised so that accurate mathematical treatment was applicable, either from the choice of inappropriate subject matter or else from the inadequate number of the experiments. In my opinion, Dr. Rhine has done the most important piece of work so far accomplished in psychical research. He has established on the firm

basis of mathematical probability the reality of extra-sensory perception. By the control of the variations which he is able to introduce into his experiments he has opened up a fruitful path of investigation and raised the hope that light may be thrown on the causes and conditions of the phenomena. He has brought to light a most important fact, *viz.*, that each subject seems to have a fixed optimum of success beyond which he cannot go. This is shown by the consistency of the results in the 'high and low' experiments to which Dr. Russell refers.

If we could discover why the subject who undoubtedly possesses the faculty of extra-sensory perception can never get beyond a certain percentage of success, we might get to the heart of the mystery. Several hypotheses suggest themselves; for example, it may be that extra-sensory perception is a faculty of the sub-liminal mind and that every individual is characterised by a co-efficient of permeability of the threshold dividing the supra-liminal from the sub-liminal. On this view a good subject would be one with a high coefficient of permeability. Experiments might be devised to test this and other hypotheses.

Lytton

H. F. SALTMARSH

### The Psychology of Psychologists

Dr. Robert Saudek's refreshing survey under the above heading has tempted me to make little of my ignorance and be boldly, if crudely, inquisitive. Your sub-heading, 'How Can We Really Know Ourselves?' and his statement that 'We must be sceptical enough to reject any theory as the final solution of any problem, but never so sceptical as not to remain open-minded to any novel suggestion' together remind me my own enquiries in this direction ended in a sense of futility some years ago when I confronted myself with the assertion that we had no real knowledge, or reality, but only conceptions of it. Dr. Saudek does not appear to offer much hope of taking me beyond that conclusion. I feel my old sense of devastating futility when I read such too facile assurances as his, *e.g.* 'Which way will lead us to real knowledge? None in particular, but all taken together'. Is that humanly possible? How is anyone ever to achieve it in a lifetime?

It follows, I think, that at best we can have only partial knowledge. But, there—I am forgetting Dr. Saudek's conclusion, quoted above. However, I note that that dictum of his comes perilously near cancelling itself, and the fact reminds me that another one of my early conclusions was that the quest for knowledge is like the kitten chasing its tail; the purpose of living, as I see it, is merely the development of self-consciousness, which means living. All the rest seems to be words—labels.

Netherlee

J. J. MCCALL

### Contemporary Criticism

Mr. Kenneth Muir does right to attack the current attitude towards Shelley, and, though his parenthetical sneer at Mr. T. S. Eliot is rather unnecessary, it is true that Mr. Eliot's complete inability to cope with Shelley both as man and poet is regrettable and amazing. If poetry is the expression of valuable experience, and if the value of the experience rather than the actual expression of it be taken as the initial critical principle, Shelley is surely not merely greater than Keats, but also one of the very greatest of our poets. Nor can his craftsmanship be despised. Wordsworth claimed that Shelley was, 'in some respects, the best artist of us all. I mean in workmanship of style', and for sheer versatility Shelley surpassed any of his contemporaries. When Mr. Eliot reads 'The Cenci' he will find that it contains much that will appeal to the Middletonian appetite.

Droitwich Spa

JAMES M. NOSWORTHY

### Should Our Spelling be Simplified?

The argument of Mr. Faber, as developed by Mr. Ashmore Baker, appears to be: (a) that the Latin language lost its greatness because it was used by others than Romans, and (b) that the Roman people lost its greatness because it fused with these Latin-speaking non-Romans; hence the same is likely to happen to England and the English if English is used by other peoples.

But have the premises been correctly stated? To take (b) first, what I believe to have happened was that in the second and first centuries B.C., Roman (or more strictly, Italian) administrators spread over the Roman Empire and caused Latin to be used as the official language of the Empire. (In the eastern part Greek remained the ordinary international language.)

Two things then happened: (1) By the first century A.D. the lower classes of the free Roman population, and by the second century the upper classes, had become considerably interfused with non-Romans; this interfusion was due chiefly to political and economic causes, but was doubtless facilitated to some extent by the widespread use of Latin. (2) From the first century A.D. Roman greatness began to decline; the causes of this are (as always in these cases) obscure, but it is clear that the upper classes were becoming effete before they became intermixed with new elements.

Then as to (a), the Latin language as used by Romans did not begin to decay until it had been used by Spaniards and Greeks and Moors for two or three centuries. The real cause of the decay seems to have been the decline of Roman nationality; and it was only when there were no Romans left to speak and write Latin that classical Latin sank (or changed) into mediæval.

If the case of America must be quoted, then let it be remembered that the United States, while using practically the same language as ours, has developed a national individuality, which we do not imitate; this seems to be of much greater significance than the sprinkling of Americanisms which we are incorporating into our language.

London, N.3

JOHN MACOMISH

### Musical Interpretation

Can Dr. Grace tell us how to distinguish between the iniquities of the copyist and the vagaries of the performer? In volume four of the Beethoven Sonatas as recorded by Schnabel, the two last chords of the opening subject of the last movement are played with a marked accent on the *second*. I have two editions of this sonata (Augener edited by Buonamici and Ricordi edited by Cassella) both of which agree in marking the *first* of these chords *sf* and the *second p*, and moreover Egerton Lowe states—'the first only of these two should be *sf*'. The grouping and phrasing of these chords would suggest (I write as an amateur and am open to correction) that the accent naturally falls on the first, as indeed, it is often played, *e.g.* in the recent broadcast by Miss Scharrer. In actual playing the effect, of course, sounds quite different in the two cases. Yet here we have an artist who has been almost universally acclaimed by all the critics as the High Priest of the Beethoven sanctuary, apparently disregarding the composer's written intentions. One is forced to the conclusion that either the critics are far from conscientious or that musical editors are very slipshod in their methods. Can Dr. Grace enlighten us on this point?

Cambridge

R. B. HAINES

### Communism in China

The picture which Mr. Hughes gives your readers in 'Communist Rebels in China' is that of small bands of extremist 'rebels' sowing destruction wherever they turn. One-sixth of China is occupied by the 'stable' (*i.e.* consolidated) Soviet districts. The Central District alone is twice the size of Holland and Belgium taken together. The 'stable' and 'unstable' districts constitute no less than one-fourth of China. There is not a word of this in Mr. Hughes' talk: not a word of the economic and cultural achievements of this new republic, in the midst of war against the aggression of Chiang Kai Shek. In consideration for your space I cannot do more than mention the eight-hour day, special Labour Codes for the care of women in childbirth, etc., the establishment of 340 primary schools and a university where previously there were only 23 so-called schools. Not a word of the six offensive expeditions sent by Chiang Kai Shek against the young Soviet Republic, all of which have foundered completely in spite of the assistance of seventy German military experts and an American loan of 40,000,000 dollars. There is, of course, no word of the British penetration into Sin-Kiang (Chinese Turkestan), whence it is threatening the flanks of the middle-Asian Soviet territory.

These facts may be unpleasant to Mr. Hughes, but if he is setting out to give an idea of the scene in China today they must be included, because they are the most prominent features. The statement from page 22 of the League of Nations' Lytton Report is relevant: 'It [the Soviet Republic] has become an actual rival of the National Government. It possesses its own law, army and government, and its own territorial sphere of action. For this state of affairs there is no parallel in any other country'.

King's Lynn

JOHN PEARSE



The Road, Winter

## American Life in Picture

By NORAH NICHOLLS

**A**S Russel Crouse, the American columnist and social historian, so justly remarks in *Mr. Currier and Mr. Ives: a Note on their Lives and Times*, 'historians have always taken history too seriously'. For the man in the street the presentation of history has always been accidental and unconscious from the days when written language itself relied on images until today, when the ordinary citizen, in no matter what country, follows the news of the day largely by means of pictured newspapers, movie news or broadcast items of information.

Nathaniel Currier had no end in view—other than earning a living for himself and his family—when in the early eighteenth-thirties he started in business for himself in New York City. Lithography was a novelty in the United States and he apprenticed himself to the first successful firm employing the new process, Messrs. William and John Pendeton of Boston. Five years later he set up in business for himself, first in Philadelphia and then in New York, where he was later joined by James M. Ives, an artist who wisely turned his talents to commercial uses.

The firm of Currier and Ives as an entity existed for almost a hundred years, its death-knell in 1907 being sounded by the photogravure sections of the press and the rapid growth of the movie industry. During its existence the famous lithographers depicted every phase of American life; the struggles of the pioneers; the beauty of the clippers with their slim racing lines; incidents of the Civil and Mexican Wars; portraits of the Presidents and other prominent people; pictures of famous race-horses and the first new fire engines; records of prize-fights;

striking American views, including farm scenes; the new railroads; women's fight for emancipation and the first signs of the vain war against alcohol. A complete social history, larger in its scope than our own Hogarth, Rowlandson and Cruikshank with whom, as visual historians, a slight though not very striking comparison could be drawn.

The business of producing lithographs, as carried on by these enterprising Americans, was purely journalistic. An important event occurred, and swiftly—incredibly swiftly in those days—the event was recorded on stone, transferred to paper, coloured by hand in amazing hues of flaming red and grassy green, and put on sale. The New York fire of 1835 gave the firm a promising start and thousands of copies were sold of the 'Ruins of the Merchants' Exchange, N.Y. After the Destructive Conflagration of December 16 and 17, 1835'. In January, 1840, the steamship *Lexington* caught fire in Long Island Sound and more than a hundred lives were lost. Three days later the print appeared with seven columns of descriptive matter. Or there was a heavy fall of snow in New York and Mr. Currier himself posed for his artists in a sledge drawn by two horses—one chestnut, one grey—with his pretty second wife fashionably garbed in ermine with a very unsuitably befrilled white lace bonnet.

What the public wanted then as now was news—tabloid news. But there was a big difference: tastes were simpler—men were still primitive enough to be fascinated by scenes of danger and death, women were sufficiently 'unspoiled' to want sentiment and plenty of it. Sex was a book unopened

from the beginning of the century. On one single occasion Mr. Currier and Mr. Ives were sufficiently unwise as to present their public with 'The Three Graces'—a representation of three extremely plump ladies in the nude. The print aroused a storm of indignation, was withdrawn, and such a

The historical nicety of observation usually shown was sometimes clouded by prejudice, obvious, for instance, in the series depicting the first efforts of women to attain some degree of independence. On this subject the Printmakers were lamentably unoriginal and followed the lead of the New

York editor who was amazed at the suggestion that women should consider they had any 'Wrongs' to right. As he plaintively observed: 'The ladies have always had the best place and the choicest tit-bits at the table'. The Currier and Ives commentary was intended to be more crushing. In 'The Age of Brass or the Triumphs of Woman's Rights' we have a humble-looking man carrying a baby, with a woman threatening him, while a girl with a (now) very fashionable flat straw hat and horn spectacles (prophetic indeed!) is labelled 'For Sheriff Miss Hang Man'. A very handsome lady of somewhat masculine charms appears in the back-



The Age of Brass

theme was never repeated. The most popular prints were pioneer scenes of the Far West, such as that epic of the covered waggon, 'The Rocky Mountains: Emigrants Crossing the Plains'; or sporting scenes such as 'The Life of a Hunter—A Tight Fix' which was originally drawn by an English artist, Arthur William Tait, and is now for collectors one of the most valuable of the prints enumerated by Henry T. Peters in his famous book on the same theme, *Currier and Ives: Printmakers to the American People* (Doubleday Doran & Co. Inc., New York).

Planned particularly for women were the series extolling the ecstasies of betrothal, such as 'The Lovers' Quarrel', 'The Lovers' Reconciliation', or 'Popping the Question', in which the young man has the appearance of a modern young woman with somewhat too ample a bust and bobbed hair. Also for women, and neurotically penitent males, was the series of drunkards, reminiscent of Cruikshank's 'Bottle', and a well-known neo-Hogarthian sequence by W. P. Frith. Such were 'The Rumseller's Lament', 'Dear Father, Drink No More', 'Come Home, Father', with its haunting and still famous refrain, 'Father, dear Father, come home with me now'; and, prophetic of Carry Nation and the fight for Prohibition, 'The Saloon Must Go'. The most famous of the series was 'The Drunkard's Progress from the First Glass to the Grave', printed in 1848, in which, starting with Step 1: 'A Glass with a Friend', the alcoholic enthusiast reaches the apogee of his liquid career and declines to the last step, 'Death by Suicide', where strangely enough the victim's blood escapes the usual lurid red and is depicted as a dirty brown—possibly a chemically accurate deduction!

ground smoking a cigar and wearing a top-hat.

Mrs. Bloomer, who really existed at this time in New England, also comes in for a certain amount of attention in 'The Bloomer Costume', a form of dress with long Turkish trousers and a 'jumper' rather reminiscent of the costume of Signorina d'Alvarez at Wimbledon some seasons ago.



Popping the Question

Round this costume waged a fight hardly believable in this age of stockingless legs, shorts and backless swimming suits!

I have described some of the more amusing prints, but for the collector or serious student of history the most important are the ones closely connected with the growth of America as a nation, such as 'Across the Continent—Westward the Course of Empire Takes its Way' (1868), showing the first through train of the Union Pacific Railroad from New York to San Francisco; or the series depicting the gradual victory of the white man over the Indians, such as 'The Prairie Hunter:



The Rocky Mountains settlers crossing the Plain



The Drunkard's Progress from the First Glass to the Grave

One Rubbed Out', or 'The Port of New York. Bird's Eye View from the Battery', which, printed in 1872, presents a sylvan island fringed by peaceful water, the surface of which is covered with small sailing vessels. It contains nothing familiar to one who has observed the same scene sixty years later!

The value of the Currier and Ives prints has only recently been appreciated, though far-sighted collectors, such as Mr. Harry T. Peters, have for many years appreciated their potential worth. At the beginning of the twentieth century the aim of cultured Americans was to be European-minded; it required the slump of 1929 and a period of comparative seclusion from Europe to turn their thoughts back towards themselves. The interest in American literature, art and history naturally existed years before, but it needed disaster



The Pursuit

been cruel to the Indians, actuated by greed; a hard drinker, he may have been oblivious to the call of empire; but, like the Englishman in the Far East, he has achieved a triumph of colonisation on which the world must look with awe and admiration. His history, his sports, his dwellings, his trains are the foundation on which today rests a mighty continent. The labours of Messrs. Currier and Ives assure that his 'soul goes marching on!'

to crystallise that interest. Today in many cases European treasures bought in hasty enthusiasm are being returned to their countries of origin. The love of things American is a growing one, not only in America but in Europe, where the American miracle, though sometimes jeered at, is nevertheless appreciated at its true worth. The Far West pioneer may have

## Two American Poems

*By writers mentioned in the article on the following page*

### The Groundhog

In June, amid the golden fields,  
I saw a groundhog lying dead.  
Dead lay he; my senses shook,  
And mind outshot our naked frailty.  
There lowly in the vigorous summer  
His form began its senseless change,  
And made my senses waver dim  
Seeing nature ferocious in him.  
Inspecting close his maggot's might  
And seething cauldron of his being,  
Half with loathing, half with a strange love,  
I poked him with an angry stick.  
The fever arose, became a flame  
And Vigour circumscribed the skies,  
Immense energy in the sun,  
And through my frame a sunless trembling.  
My stick had done nor good nor harm.  
Then stood I silent in the day  
Watching the object, as before;  
And kept my reverence for knowledge  
Trying for control, to be still,  
To quell the passion of the blood;  
Until I had bent down on my knees  
Praying for joy in the sight of decay.  
And so I left; and I returned  
In Autumn strict of eye, to see  
The sap gone out of the groundhog,  
But the bony sodden hulk remained.  
But the year had lost its meaning,  
And in intellectual chains  
I lost both love and loathing,  
Mured up in the wall of wisdom.  
Another summer took the fields again  
Massive and burning, full of life,  
But when I chanced upon the spot  
There was only a little hair left,  
And bones bleaching in the sunlight  
Beautiful as architecture;  
I watched them like a geometer,  
And cut a walking stick from a birch.  
It has been three years, now.

There is no sign of the groundhog.  
I stood there in the whirling summer,  
My hand capped a withered heart,  
And thought of China and of Greece,  
Of Alexander in his tent;  
Of Montaigne in his tower,  
Of Saint Theresa in her wild lament.

RICHARD EBERHART

### Portrait

What face she put on it, we will not discuss:  
she went hence an hour since. Where she went  
is another matter. To the north, to the south,  
as the man whistled, or the whim bade, she went,  
or even—who can say—following a star.  
Her heart is like an hourglass, from which the sand runs—  
no sooner run than tilted to run again;  
her mind, a mirror, which reflects always the last moment;  
her face, you would know it anywhere, it gives you back  
your own light, like the moon. Tell her a lie,  
threefold she reflects it; tell her the truth,  
and its returned brilliance will strike you dead.  
She is of quicksilver. You might as well  
pillow your head on a cloud, as on that breast,  
or strive to sleep with a meteor; when you wake,  
she is gone, your own hand is under your cheek.

Yet she is of the material that earth is made of:  
will breed as quick as a fly: bloom like the cherry,  
fearless of frost: and has a nimble fancy  
as tropic in pattern as a fernleaf. She walks  
as naturally as a young tree might walk:  
with no pretence: picks up her roots and goes  
out of your world, and into the secret darkness,  
as a lady with lifted train will leave a ballroom;  
and who knows why.

Wherefor do you love her, gentlemen?  
Because, like the spring earth, she is fruitfulness?  
and you are seed? you need no other reason?  
and she no other than her perpetual season.

CONRAD AIKEN

Writers of America—V

# American Poetry

By MICHAEL ROBERTS

WORDS may be used as the prophet or the sergeant-major uses them, to make you do as he wishes; they may be used as the policeman uses them, to give you information; they may be used simply to show that a person likes you, or likes the things that you like; they may be used as they are in nonsense rhymes, to make a pleasant sound; they may be used as the artist tries to use them, to make five white chickens and a rain-wet scarlet wheelbarrow appear as vividly to you as to himself. And finally they may be used as the philosopher may use them, to discover knowledge which is implicit in the language.

The poet may be concerned with each or all of these activities. He may be a prophet or a musician or an artist; he may even be a lecturer or philosopher. If he is a prophet, we must judge him by the effectiveness and the soundness of his preaching; if he is an artist, we must judge him by the charm and vigour of his verbal pictures. But beyond his work as prophet or philosopher or storyteller, the poet does something more. He catches at words and phrases that move us more profoundly than we understand, and sometimes uses them to make a pattern which pleases us without apparently fulfilling any of the purposes we have mentioned. Unless his writing makes a pattern which excites the imagination in this way, it is not poetry: it is only preaching, or description, or argument, or versifying.

In tracing the history of American poetry it is particularly necessary to remember this. The early American versifiers imitated English models: they expressed familiar sentiments and admirable doctrine in regular metrical verses, more or less neatly; but they neglected music, they had nothing much to say which had not been said before, and they did not excite the imagination. They pleased some readers who agreed with them, and they bored others. Even Poe, who talked so much of 'music', used only a limited range of sound, and to some his poems are dull because they are drowsy, not imaginative.

New work which appeals to the imagination leaves no-one indifferent. Readers with any taste for poetry at all either hate it or are wildly excited by it. The first American poet whose writing attracted this attention was Walt Whitman. Whitman, like Blake and Lawrence, was a prophetic poet. Like Thoreau, he compared a certain natural, simple way of life with the complexities of industrialism, and voted for it. He was born in 1819 and died in 1891, and the doctrine in his writing is discussed, even now, more often than its appeal to the imagination. Yet the importance of any poetry, including Whitman's, depends not merely on the value of the prophecy, but on the vividness with which it is presented; in short, on its imaginative pattern, and Whitman conveys his way of life to us with all the vividness of dream. Not that he babbles vaguely like Poe of dreams and drowsiness; dreams themselves are seldom experiences of drowsiness and the nebulous ineffable, but of actions, and bright colours, and experiences which excite emotions keener and more intense than waking. Similarly, in Whitman's poetry, the words he uses have more than their ordinary effect:

The song, the wondrous chant of the grey-brown bird,  
And the tallying chant, the echo aroused in my soul,  
With the lustrous and drooping star with the countenance full of  
woe,  
With the holders holding my hand near the call of the bird,  
Comrades mine, and I in the midst, and their memory ever to keep  
for the dead I loved so well,  
For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands—and this for  
his dear sake,  
Lilac and star and bird twined with the chain of my soul,  
Therein the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and dim.

The actuality of Whitman's writing was something new in American poetry: Whitman dealt with genuine feelings and with real landscapes, not with a world of make-believe, and further, his poetry had imaginative vigour. To find a parallel to it, we must turn to the Bible:

Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or  
the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the  
cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the  
spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

The words of Ecclesiastes are less easy to understand than

those of Whitman, but their imaginative power is greater, and the book of Ecclesiastes possessed a quality which was lacking in Whitman's poetry—a definite 'form'. Whitman's poetry is imaginative: he uses words in contexts and rhythms which give them more than their ordinary effect, but the symbols are seldom integrated into complete imaginative form.

The word 'form' in poetry does not necessarily mean the completion of a narrative or of a metrical pattern, though a good epic, or a sonnet, or a triolet possesses imaginative as well as prosodic 'form'. A work is said to possess form if the reader is left with the impression that the work is complete: that it could not have begun, or continued, or ended differently without producing a different and inferior effect. If a work possesses a definite form, its total effect is something more than that of the sum of its parts, and to miss out a part would be to alter its effect completely. Imaginative form is recognised directly. This statement gives us no definite tests, but there are many things in life which we recognise without mechanical rules—the smell of mint, or the feeling of thunder in the air, or happiness in a face—yet if we allow for personal prejudice we arrive at fairly general agreement.

We can make the general meaning of the word 'form' a little clearer if we take a poem, 'Success', by another American writer whose work has influenced others:

Success is counted sweetest  
By those who ne'er succeed.  
To comprehend a nectar  
Requires sorest need.

Not one of all the purple host  
Who took the flag today  
Can tell the definition,  
So clear, of victory.

As he, defeated, dying,  
On whose forbidden ear  
The distant strains of triumph  
Break, agonised and clear.

The writer, Emily Dickinson, was born in 1830 and died in 1866; many of her poems were written in the course of an unhappy love affair. But we scarcely need to know the personal meaning in order to feel the force of her poem and recognise its completeness. Quite apart from the meaning, the *sound* seems to insist on the poem ending where it does. Yet the metrical pattern is irregular, there is no simple rule which governs that impression.

Nearly all Emily Dickinson's poems were short: she did not solve the problem of finding a form or pattern for the long poem, and when we come to more recent poets, we find that very few Americans have attempted to solve the problem by writing in regular metres. From Melville (a neglected poet) to Pound and Eliot and Robinson Jeffers (all of whom were born about 1887) they have found the existing English schemes unsatisfactory. They are not trying to be 'difficult' or 'clever': a poet does not deliberately antagonise most of his possible readers by trying to invent his own form unless he can see no other way of making the poem which he feels, available to anyone at all. As E. E. Cummings, an amusing mountebank among American poets, has said:

i would  
suggest that certain ideas gestures  
rhymes, like Gillette Razor Blades  
having been used and reused  
to the mystical moment of dullness emphatically are  
Not to Be Resharpened

For the serious American, the older forms were unsatisfactory from the beginning. The rhythms of English poetry were removed from those in which feeling was expressed in his native language. Furthermore, the difficulty was not only to find a form, a vocabulary, and a tone which would suit his purpose: he had also to adjust himself to his country. He was one of a huge population in a huge country; his ancestors had not been there; they had been in Poland, Norway, County Mayo or Sardinia. The books, ideas, paintings that he cared for had not grown up there; there was no traditional respect for any kind of art or disinterested science; and yet the poets wanted to write a great poem to show how it all fitted in—

conquest, and New Orleans, poetry, cowpunchers, hoboes, mathematics, subways, the Civil War, Italian painting, and the solid South. They wanted to make people feel that it all fitted in, that it wasn't just the sordidness and wild-beast show that it appeared to be. Some of them gave up the struggle. Novelists like Henry James, poets like Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot and Conrad Aiken, many of the painters and musicians, came to Europe. Nearly all the younger poets tried a spell in Paris. Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot have developed a learned and cosmopolitan poetry, the poetry based on the emotions of the scholar and the gentleman. Similarly, Conrad Aiken, who has developed the rhythms and the imagery of the later plays of Chapman and Shakespeare, sees himself as a poet in a certain cultural rather than a national tradition:

Verlaine and Rimbaud, precious pair of poets,  
Genius in both (but what is genius?) playing  
At chess . . .

Of those who stayed in America, some did not feel the problem at all: some, like Carl Sandburg and Vachel Lindsay, tried to ignore the European tradition and to write poetry which dealt with one aspect of American life. They caught the rhythm of daily life and ordinary speech; they produced life-like pictures, but no imaginative pattern. Others were content to follow one of the minor English traditions. Like Robert Frost (born, like Sandburg and Lindsay, in the late 'seventies) they applied to their own state or country the orthodox tradition of English rural poetry. Among the women a few, like Elinor Wylie, were influenced by Emily Dickinson: perhaps the soundness of that influence accounts for the fact that in recent years American women have written what may be called women's poetry, poetry which is primarily the expression of feelings experienced more often and more keenly by women than by men. So Edna St. Vincent Millay writes:

I am not resigned to the shutting away of loving hearts in the hard ground.

So it is, and so it will be, for so it has been, time out of mind:  
Into the darkness they go, the wise and the lovely: crowned  
With lilies and with laurel they go; but I am not resigned . . .

This poetry is out of the main stream, and by far the most impressive of these lesser currents was that which appeared in the work of a group of young writers including Allen Tate, John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson and Merrill Moore, who first became known through a magazine named *The Fugitive*, published in Nashville ten or twelve years ago. They were good Southerners, and each of them presented, in poetry vivid and alert in its rhythms, a coherent picture of that aspect of the American scene which they knew. Perhaps for them the problem was easier than for the Northerners. The South preserved something of the English cultural tradition; enough to show these poets a violent contrast between the new commercial world around them, and the orderly civilised world which they believed in. There was a meaningless jabber of people all intent on selfish business, thieving was a virtue—'commercial acumen'—art and science were prostituted. As Allen Tate said in his 'Retroduction to American History':

Narcissus is vocabulary. Hermes decorates  
A cornice on the Third National Bank. Vocabulary  
Becomes confusion, decoration a blight; the Parthenon  
In Tennessee stucco, art for the sake of death. . . .

Allen Tate does not ignore the central problem (he has written a very fine 'Ode to the Confederate Dead') but more often he concerns himself with simpler, constituent problems. He sees one thing, and sees it clearly. Thus he compresses into a quatrain the material which William Faulkner expands into half-a-dozen novels:

The idiot greens the meadow with his eyes,  
The meadow creeps, implacable and still;  
A dog barks; the hammock swings; he lies.  
One, two, three, the cows bulge on the hill.

Again, Richard Eberhart, who is one of the few American poets whose poetry (like much of Wordsworth's) springs from the emotion which accompanies thought, does not directly attack the specific American problem. He has written a notable long poem called 'A Bravery of Earth' which is outwardly the story of the four stages of the growth of a man to full humanity. When it was first published it seemed to the present writer the first readable long poem which had appeared for a very long time, and it seemed definitely to produce in total effect greater than the effect of its parts.

By far the most ambitious attempt to find a form for the American epic is 'The Bridge' of Hart Crane. Much of it, like the poem 'To Brooklyn Bridge,' is written in ten-syllabled quatrains which are remarkable because they give hardly any sense of artificiality:

How many dawns, chill from his rippling rest  
The seagull's wings shall dip and pivot him,  
Shedding white rings of tumult, building high  
Over the chained bay waters Liberty.

The sections which follow describe in differing tones and tempos episodes from American history, and there is a sense of unity about the work as it leads to the final stanza:

So to that Everpresence, beyond time,  
Like spears ensanguined of one tolling star  
That bleeds infinity—the orphic strings,  
Sidereal phalanxes, leap and converge:  
—One Song, one Bridge of Fire! . . .

Yet there is, after all, something unsatisfactory in Crane's poetry. It is magnificent—even as pure sound, it is more skilful and more varied than Edgar Allan Poe—but it ignores too much; it fails to find and take for granted a solid background of firm belief and sure emotion; it does not say often enough things which are simple, important and memorable; its images are conceits rather than symbols which speak directly to the imagination, and sometimes its sound becomes a jumble of pentameter and latinism and alliteration.

Less direct in its attack is the 'Conquistador' of Archibald MacLeish, a vigorous narrative, in a modified *terza rima*, of the conquest of Mexico, as remembered in his old age by one of the generals of Diaz. It does not attack the American problem as explicitly as Hart Crane or E. A. Robinson have done or as Archibald MacLeish did in his earlier poems, nor is there any reason why it should do. The poems which have perfected or established a form in English have not been poems 'about' England, or the British Empire, but poems like 'Tempest', 'Paradise Lost', and the lyrics of Blake and Herrick, not written with any intention of extending a national tradition. And in the same way those of the American poets who have written poems most complete in themselves, and most general in their appeal, yet necessarily American in their origin, do not deliberately set out to invent a national tradition, or a myth. They come back to something which is common to all men, and express it in ways which are appropriate to their time and country. Robinson Jeffers, for example, bases his poem 'Night' on the deep-rooted tendency to long for death and rest (an impulse which is the complement of the impulse to activity and life), and uses images which remind us of the American continent, and the Pacific Coast where the poet lives:

O passionately at peace when will that tide draw shoreward?  
Truly the spouting fountains of light, Antares, Arcturus,  
Tire of their flow, they sing one song but they think silence.  
The striding winter giant Orion shines, and dreams darkness.  
And life, the flicker of men and moths and the wolf on the hill,  
Though furious for continuance, passionately feeding, passionately  
Remaking itself upon its mates, remembers deep inward  
The calm mother, the quietness of the womb and the egg,  
The primal and the latter silences: dear Night it is memory  
Prophesies, prophecy that remembers, the charm of the dark.  
And I and my people, we are willing to love the four-score years  
Heartily; but as a sailor loves the sea, when the helm is for harbour.

This poem, which seems to me to fulfil, as well as any, the formal conditions, is the statement of a psychological process. Often the satisfactory forms—the sonnet, the four-movement symphony, the five-act drama—correspond to certain recurrent patterns of experience; and if we see in the history of these American poets a tendency to revert to use of fragments of the older formal patterns and to imitate, in so far as poetry can imitate them, music and its patterns, perhaps it is because the fundamental patterns of emotional experience remain unaltered, even though the words and rhythms which excite specific feelings change as the language changes. And so we find English and American poetry again converging and making our distinction between the two appear irrelevant and arbitrary.

We regret that the closing date of the Exhibition of Cotswold Art and Craftsmanship at Chipping Campden was wrongly announced in our last issue: it actually ends on September 1.

## Short Story

## Poison

By SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER

THE market was over, the town had grown so silent that one could hear very plainly the rain falling on the pavement as it had fallen all day. On the steamy windows the tracks of dribbling moisture left rivulets of crystal, and when the apprentice came in from putting up the shutters his spectacles clouded, and the change of atmosphere set him yawning—for inside the shop it was extremely cosy, and the neatness, prettiness and polish of the wares gave an impression of lady-likeness—as though it were a parlour and not a chemist's shop.

Mr. Hawley looked up from the day-book and remarked that since the beginning of the year there had not been so great a sale of the cough-cure. As he spoke he coughed; he, too, had had influenza, though he had not taken to his bed for it, doctoring his temperature with quinine and salicylate. His voice was listless, even his cough had little energy. He had taken a great deal of quinine and it had lowered his vitality. The boy, responding, said that Mr. Hawley should go off to bed with something hot. It had been a day to tax anyone, with so many people coming in and leaving the door open for the cold air to follow them. *Dogsnose*, he said; and fearing lest the advice should sound unprofessional he allowed the word to come out with blustering vehemence. For he was quite a young boy, his voice was still unruly to him.

As he spoke the door was pushed open and a stranger entered. At least it was no one known to Mr. Hawley, though at the first glance it seemed to him that the face was familiar, that he had seen it, earlier in the day, flattened against the window, staring in past the bottles and the sponges and the display cards.

It was a striking face, striking and unpleasant—round as a platter, further extended by large outstanding ears, and bedizened (for really bedizened was the word) with a pair of pale shallow eyes. Bleached and brilliant, they were like the eyes of a famished cat. The whole aspect of that face conveyed desperate hunger, though not the sort of hunger which can be appeased by a good square meal, for the facial bones were well covered, there was plenty of flesh there. It was a hunger of the blood, more likely, some variety of chlorosis. Even now, in the midst of an influenza epidemic, to see a face so bloodless made Mr. Hawley's own blood run cold.

Walking up to the counter, leaning his elbow on the curved glass of the show-case, the stranger demanded something for a cold; something strong, a pick-me-up, he said, that he could toss off then and there. And while Mr. Hawley compounded the dose, choosing from this bottle and that, he remained leaning against the counter, his bright eyes flicking over the shelves, as though in search of some aspect of clear glass that could match their brilliancy.

The boy remained also, standing about as though it seemed to him that he might be needed. He was a good boy, a careful boy; Mr. Hawley dismissed him almost affectionately, for he had been touched by that recommendation of *dogsnoose*, though he, an experienced chemist, could do better than that. What he now handed across the counter was stronger than any *dogsnoose*. The man drank it off without comment, and asked for another.

To take at bed-time, Mr. Hawley suggested; but the man said he would take it now. It would not, he averred, be too strong for him. Nothing could be too strong for such a cold as his.

On the empty pavements the raindrops pattered like thin, hurrying footsteps. Nodding towards the bottles of Special Influenza Mixture which stood prominently arranged on the counter, the man said he supposed there was a brisk demand for that at this time of year. An unhealthy season, he added; and the chemist agreed.

'Not that that does you much harm, I suppose?'

'Well, no, sir. Though this year I've not been much of an advertisement for my own goods, for I've had a touch of the flu myself.'

The man laughed, showing his teeth. They were false teeth, and the coral red of his plate was in shocking contrast to his bloodless face and lips. Even in a healthy season, he went on to say, he would suppose this town to be sickly enough, mouldering away in the midst of the fens. In all his life he had never struck such a dead-alive place, a town with no life in it, with no possible future before it.

Mr. Hawley asked him if he travelled much. To hear the town thus abused distressed him; though indeed the words were true enough, for every year trade was dwindling and now the last factory was closing down.

The man did not trouble to answer. Boredom, not interest, it seemed, moved his glance hither and thither about the shop. He shivered, and pulled up his coat-collar, but made no move to go. When he spoke again it was to speak about chemists. He spoke ruminatively, dispassionately, not at all as though he were addressing one who was a chemist himself. It must be a dreary life, he opined: the same old women with their interminable cancers and asthmas returning for their mixtures, or children wanting a pennyworth of liquorice. One might touch it up with face-powder and fancy soap for the young women, but that was only a top-dressing, and in a year or two the same young women would draggle in for teething powders and ringworm ointment. No, no, he said, coming suddenly out of his reverie, the only romance, the only redeeming excitement in a chemist's business was the traffic in poisons. That was something like. For one would have a queer, a fascinating sense of power, remembering that in a single bottle one had the wherewithal to send all one's neighbours to the churchyard. And a slip of the hand might do it, a moment's wavering of the memory.

It was not so easy as that, the chemist said. There were regulations, precautions imposed by law.

Yes, said the man, there would be. Nothing in life kept its sparkle of excitement for long. Regulations put on the damper, or if they did not, habit soon got the upper hand and made one thing as tame as another. And then, still glancing over the shop with that bright blank gaze, he began to question Mr. Hawley about the regulations which rendered even the possession of poisons a dull business, a mere routine.

There were three methods, the chemist explained. Poisons and dangerous drugs might be kept in a special cupboard, or secured on the shelves by a Tantalus-like device, making it impossible to take them down without a particular manoeuvre; as a minimum precaution they must be kept in bottles of a peculiar colour and surface, recognisable to sight and touch.

'And how did Mr. Hawley keep his', the stranger asked. 'In a cupboard?'

'In a cupboard'.

'Locked, of course?'

'Locked', said Mr. Hawley, concealing a yawn of weariness. It was a dull enough conversation, to him at any rate; nor did the stranger seem to find much interest in it either, asking questions only for the sake of asking them.

And yet, the stranger said, turning the emptied glass in his hands, poison was poison, when all was said and done. A chemist, a chemist with some incurable disease, or in trouble over money, or even tired, at last, of his dreary life and despairing of the future, might unlock that cupboard and help himself. He had his own death in his hands, no one could rob him of that.

'I have never heard', said Mr. Hawley, speaking hurriedly, speaking emphatically, 'of a chemist who poisoned himself'.

'They know better perhaps', said the man. 'They've read up the symptoms'.

Putting down the glass he paid for his drinks, stared round once more, nodded casually, and went out. Mr. Hawley sat down with a groan of fatigue. This conversation, coming at the end of a hard day, had made him feel singularly dispirited; and it was a long while before he could rouse himself sufficiently to shut up the shop and retire to his solitary rooms above it.

In the morning the boy enquired how long Monsol had stayed, nodding towards the sneezing muffin-faced misery of the advertisement. It was to be hoped, he continued, that Monsol would not come in again, for a more unpleasant customer he had never set eyes on. Mr. Hawley said mildly that when the boy had seen as many customers as he had one would seem much like another. Even as he spoke he remembered that the man overnight had implied as much; and he heard again that whining voice dwelling on the peculiar dreariness of being a chemist. He was glad to be interrupted by the voice of the boy, even though it spoke of the poor sale they had had for the

new bath-cubes. In an unhealthy season, Mr. Hawley said, the demand for toilet luxuries always lessened. The medicines, though, said the boy cheerfully, more than made up for that.

Mr. Hawley had a feeling that the man would come again. He did so, arriving at the same hour and asking, as before, for a pick-me-up. He left the door open, and the cold misty air, blowing in, roused up Mr. Hawley's neuralgia. Since it was obvious that the man had again come to linger Mr. Hawley mentioned the neuralgia as a polite pretext for shutting the door. Strychnine, said the man, was what he needed for that; nothing else on those shelves, over which his glance moved so disdainfully, would be strong enough. And as though released into his obsession he began to talk once more of poisons.

Poisons, sickness, death . . . these seemed to be the only things he cared to speak about, and yet he seemed with every word to flout the matter of his discourse, talking always with detachment and petulance, as though he were scornfully humouring the preoccupations of the man on the other side of the counter, as though poisons and sickness and death were Mr. Hawley's concerns only and nothing to him. It occurred to the chemist that a man so horribly pale, so ravaged by some strange fever of the wasting blood, should speak more seriously of sickness and death. But it was jauntily, confidently, that the man took his leave, saying that Mr. Hawley might expect to see him on the morrow.

'For I have taken a fancy to you', he added. And as though to prove it he looked back through the glass door with an affable nod. Mr. Hawley remembered his impression of a face pressed to the window on market-day. He had thought then that it might be imagination, for one often imagines things after influenza. But it was not.

He wished the stranger's fancy had pitched elsewhere, for he could not but dislike the man extremely; and the thought came to him that he might make his neuralgia a reason for spending the evening in the back shop and leaving the boy in charge of the counter. But that would not do. The boy was young, morbid conversation about poisons would do him no good; though an experienced chemist is well-salted to that aspect of his trade, young minds are easily infected with dangerous imaginings.

This time the stranger came to the point at once, asking the chemist what poisons he had sold that day; and with his customary scornfulness did not wait for an answer, going on to suppose that in a one-horse town like this ratsbane would be all that was demanded. A German rat-poison, he said, was the stuff; and he described how when the lid was taken off the paste smoked with a choking visible fume, so savagely ample was the amount of phosphorus. You spread it, he said, on bread-and-butter; and the rats who tasted it were instantly tormented with so burning a thirst that they would gnaw through leaden pipes to get at the water. Water—even a drop of water—would intensify their agony, hasten their death-throes. That was the cunning of it, he said; and his shallow colourless eyes grew rounder and rounder, and his breath, playing on Mr. Hawley's cheek as he leaned so excitedly across the counter, seemed like the fumes, choking and visible, that wreathed up from the opened tin of rat-poison.

On leaving he repeated that he had taken a fancy to Mr. Hawley; and all that night and all the next day the chemist waited in heavy misery for him to come again.

He did not come.

Four days went by, and there was no sign of the stranger. Yet Mr. Hawley was little the better for it. It was as though the stranger's ghost walked in instead, for now, every evening at closing time, Mr. Hawley felt the oncoming of a fit of the horrors. Like a thick fog, gloom and weariness would overtake him, so that he could scarcely keep his eyes open while he made up the day-book and shut the shop. Too tired for supper, he would go to bed and fall into a leaden sleep. Out of this sleep he would awaken with the conviction of having made some fatal mistake in dispensing. At some time or other during the day, it seemed to him, he had put poison into a medicine. Sometimes he had done it by mistake, at other times deliberately, not from any malice but with a malign indifference, as though a devil had possessed him and made him its conscious besotted tool. These were delusions, he knew, nothing but delusions. The attack of influenza had left him low, his persistent neuralgia was proof enough of that; horrors and bad dreams were only further signs of debility. So he would reason with himself in the midst of the dark night. But reasonings were of no avail, like the bursting of some subterranean flood the horror would rush over him again, wave after wave, and overwhelm him.

One night, during a moment when reason was uppermost,

he got up and went down to the shop and opened the prescription book. There were the prescriptions he had made up during the day, and into no one of them did a poison enter. Even while he stood looking at the page the horror came back on him, a contemptuous voice saying that the prescription-book was no register of his doings, for he would not be such a fool as to enter the details of the death poured into the bottle.

Out of these nights he would emerge broken and trembling, painfully sleepy and clumsy and forgetful. He would make mistakes in the change or hand customers the wrong article. His shaking hands knocked over the bottles on the counter or demolished the neat pyramids of soap and pill-boxes. He could no longer do up a parcel properly, the sealing-wax struggled over the white paper like smears of blood. He slopped the dispensing: though the drugs stood in their ordered positions on the shelves he could not find them. And all the while his neuralgia went nagging on. Strychnine, said a remembered voice, was what he needed for that; and on Sunday, in the closed and dusky shop, he set about compounding himself a strong tonic. But no sooner had he unlocked the poison cupboard and put forth his hand among the blue, ribbed bottles, recognisable to sight and touch, than such a horror overtook him that he slammed to the door and fled. That night, awakening, he remembered that he had not stayed to lock the cupboard; but he dared not stir out of his bed, he must lie there, sick and trembling and in a cold sweat, till the harsh morning light brought some sort of astringent to his miserable mind.

Market-day came round again, just such a day as the last, wet, cold, and foggy. He will come today, thought Mr. Hawley. As the clock jolted to the hour, and the shop emptied, and he could hear again the shutters being put up and the raindrops tapping on the pavement he was ready to pray that the stranger might indeed come. Anxiously, snappishly, he bade the boy go home, and the boy went gladly enough, for he had no wish to prolong working-hours that had lately become so unpleasant.

Mr. Hawley waited. It was the hour when his horrors were due to begin. They came, but the stranger did not. Tonight the horrors took a definite form. Mr. Hawley began to think of diseases of the brain. The ills of the flesh which his profession had made him so well acquainted with were bad enough, but madness was worse. There were no remedies, no palliatives, in his shop for that. 'Neurasthenia', he cried, 'it's only neurasthenia!' There were dozens of patent medicines for neurasthenia; and he took up one of them and read the word *phosphorus*.

When at last the stranger came quietly into the shop Mr. Hawley was standing before the opened poison cupboard.

'So you are having a look at it', said the stranger.

The chemist shut the cupboard at his words, and locked it. Now, at the usual request for a pick-me-up, he laid the key on the counter, and turned in a flurry to find the various bottles he needed. The sal volatile . . . he could not find the sal volatile . . . the boy must have replaced it on the wrong shelf. While he was staring at the drug-jars the stranger picked up the poison cupboard key and dropped it into his pocket.

'Make it strong', he said.

He certainly needed it strong. Tonight he seemed more bloodless, more famishing, than ever before, and his eyes, so round and pale and brilliant, were like pieces of glass set in a mask of white rubber.

He tossed off the pick-me-up, paid for it, and went away.

Mr. Hawley scarcely noticed his departure. Dragging his feet, only half conscious of the routine he performed, he shut and barred the door, put out the lights, and took himself to bed. With his hand on the switch he stood staring at the smooth mound of his pillow as if he had never seen a pillow before, or would never see one again. Bed had been a kind place, once, and he a dutiful contented man.

When he awoke the light was still on, and this made the room look like a sickroom. But he had no mind for speculation now. Out of that pillow, so smoothly mounded, had sprung a new nightmare. He had dreamed that he had poisoned himself, that the poison was at this minute working in him, and that that was why he felt, as the rats did, such intolerable thirst. But now I am mad, he said to himself, smoothly and reasonably. He had been already mad when he opened the cupboard to look in. Like the rats, frantic for the water which must complete their undoing, he, already poisoned in mind, must seek out the poison which should finish off his body. Then the stranger had come in, thwarting him. But now he was alone, there was nothing to stay him; and he got out of bed, put on slippers and a dressing-gown, and went downstairs.

Seeing the familiar shop, so cosy, so tidy and lady-like and parlour-like, he was seized with a piercing regret that he must leave it, end himself horribly, all for no reason. Fear leaped up in him, then commonsense, awakening, overmastered fear. What he must do, what as a reasonable chemist suffering from neurasthenia consequent upon influenza, he must do, was to look this obsession in the face until it swayed him no longer. Yes, calmly and deliberately, he would open the poison cupboard, confront those bottled terrors, read their labels, handle them, may be; and then, having seen them for what they were, a dangerous but essential part of his stock in trade, familiar but disciplined perils, he would shut them away and go back to bed, his own man once more. The key was on the counter. He remembered leaving it there, and that showed the state he had allowed himself to get into; for such neglect was criminally careless.

The key was not on the counter.

He would not be foiled like that, death should not escape him so easily! Not for an accident of a key would he put off his desire, spend such another day of torment, go mad and be carried to an asylum. There were his dear poisons, his comforters, his dreadful and dear ones, waiting quiet as pigeons in a pigeon-cote. With his fist he smashed the cupboard door, chose, swiftly and unerringly, the bottle he wanted, poured out, deft with long habit, the strong, the sure dose into the measuring glass, and drank it off.

At the inquest the stranger was the chief witness. He told how he had gone to the chemist with a bad cold, how he had fallen in to conversation with him, how the chemist had spoken of the poisons in his charge. On subsequent visits Mr. Hawley had spoken after the same fashion, so markedly, so boastfully, that the stranger had surmised the existence of something like an obsession. He told, too, how, on his last visit, he had found the chemist standing before the opened cupboard and how, on a sudden impulse, he had picked up the key and gone with it and his suspicions to the police station. A stranger to the town, he had been some little while finding his way thither; and in that interval the chemist was a dead man.

He was highly commended by the coroner for his humane and prudent behaviour.

The apprentice, who was also called as a witness, could not take his eyes from the stranger. All his pallor, all his famished looks were gone. His complexion was clear and ruddy, his voice was ringing, he seemed the picture of a well-nourished man. It was as though poor Mr. Hawley's death, thought the boy, had been the very pick-me-up his customer had needed, as though he had replenished himself with the dead man's blood; and his thoughts trudged between the dead man and the survivor, but could find no clue, no explanation.

On the following day the stranger left the town.

## Forty Years of Shaw

Prefaces of Bernard Shaw. Constable. 12s. 6d.

THIS IS A SUBSTANTIAL TOME containing thirty-seven different Prefaces: eight hundred pages set up in the satisfactory typographical style to which Shaw has accustomed his readers over a period of forty years. Arranged under the headings Sociological, Political, Religious, Autobiographical, Miscellaneous, the collection includes work as early as 1894—the preface to 'Mrs. Warren's Profession', and work as late as the preface to 'On the Rocks' in 1933: it includes, moreover, not only prefaces to his own plays but one or two associated with works written by other people, as the preface to 'Three Plays by Brieux' (1909), and that to the Webbs' work on English Local Government (1921). And what many of Shaw's older readers will particularly welcome are the many postscripts dated within the last year or two that look back on events, yet written with the old vigour; as, for example, when in challenging a newspaper statement he coins the phrase—'that breathereaving lie'.

In the inevitable Preface to All the Prefaces—though it is titled 'To introduce the prefaces'—Shaw justifies this publication on the ground that though their avowedly 'journalistic' character should have seen most of them by now on the scrap-heap, the fact is that 'the folly of our rulers and voters' (Shaw never lets his readers escape their own share in the process of castigation) is in violent contrast to the 'wisdom of our literature', part of which consists—the inference is fair—of these eight hundred pages. But there are other justifications: those of us whose thinking life is contemporary with Shaw's creative work, and who have found our way of thinking influenced by his prefaces, will welcome this re-issue for convenience and old times' sake; and for students in many fields the volume will, for long years to come, rank as a first-class source-book. Yet it is the new reader that counts; and Shaw's reason for publication the substantial one. How is this reason to be justified?

Since the writing of the preface to 'Getting Married' over a quarter of a century ago, though this was re-inforced by the Report of a Royal Commission, there have been only two ludicrously trifling additions to our Marriage and Divorce laws: (a) the excision of the requirement of cruelty as well as adultery as a ground of divorce for wives—pointed out in the 1933 postscript; (b) an extension of the time during which a marriage may be solemnised in church by three hours, declared to have been allowed to pass through the Lords as an 'unobserved' accident. Ludicrous indeed—Shaw's indictment of the folly and cowardice of our rulers as well as his substantial statement of the case stands as true today as it was twenty-eight years ago.

Possibly Shaw is right in his suggestion that the Preface to 'Mrs. Warren's Profession'—dated 1894—has less reason for preservation: but if the spirit of censorship has become somewhat less narrow, the form remains; and the more liberal view results from the pressure of public opinion, not from the

enlightenment of our 'respectables, rulers, and reverends'. The advent of the cinema with its self-imposed censorship, as pointed out in a 1902 postscript, brings up the old difficulties and discussions in a slightly different way: and the whole case against censorship as stated here and in the Preface to 'Blanco Posnet' remains as strong as ever. This 'Blanco Posnet' preface is grouped among the political; and as most of the political plays are of quite recent date, there is in this group only 'John Bull's Other Island' by which to prove Shaw's wisdom against the test of time. One easily forgets how much of this preface deals with Egypt: between 1904 and 1934 much water has flowed under the bridge of British politics in their relationship to both Ireland and Egypt! In a postscript of 1929 Shaw refrains from saying 'I told you so', and contents himself with suggesting that Ulster will one day be glad to join with the Free State: but that prediction is less near of fulfilment than a second suggestion, that nationalism under the re-created European boundaries is even now straining to near breaking-point.

When Shaw in his preface to 'Methuselah' regretted that his 'powers were waning', most of his supporters protested that neither that preface nor the wonderful Pentateuch bore any evidence of it; and the subsequent marvel of 'St. Joan', both play and preface, confirmed this protest. This group of Religious prefaces contains also the call for a revised edition of the Gospels that constitutes the preface to 'Androcles'; and, though the group is not strengthened by the *Black Girl* preface, the first three together constitute a magnificent statement of the twentieth century's 'Foundations of Belief'.

The inclusion in the Autobiographical group of so many of the very early prefaces reminds one that this parade of egoism, like the parade of buffoonery, deliberately adopted as a technique to get his propaganda across, has been something of a Nemesis that still alienates men of goodwill and power and keeps them from supporting principles and causes advocated by Shaw, as in this collection of prefaces, with an insight, power of statement, and genuine human sympathy, that whatever his latter-day shortcomings may be, have hardly been equalled in our time.

A. CLOW FORD

Among additions to standard libraries are E. V. Lucas' *Open Road* and Oscar Wilde's *Intentions* (Methuen's Fountain Library, 2s. 6d. each); and to the World's Classics (Oxford University Press, 2s. each), Tolstoy's *On Life and Essays on Religion*, *Five Pre-Shakespearean Comedies*—Medwall's 'Fulgens and Lucrece', Heywood's 'Four PP', Udall's 'Ralph Roister Doister', Gascoigne's 'Supposes', and 'Gammer Gurton's Needle'; and *Five Elizabethan Comedies*—Lyly's 'Campaspe', Peele's 'Old Wives' Tale', Greene's 'Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay', Dekker's 'Shoemaker's Holiday', and 'The Merry Devil of Edmonton'.

## The Listener's Book Chronicle

**Behind the Throne.** By Paul H. Emden  
Hodder and Stoughton. 15s.

READERS OF THE MONUMENTAL VOLUMES of *Queen Victoria's Letters* become very familiar with the names (and not much more than the names) of the men who successively served the Queen as Private Secretary—Sir Charles Phipps, General Grey, Henry Ponsonby, Arthur Bigge. Mr. Emden's purpose is to sketch the personalities of these, and others, and to trace the development of an important institution. Who was the first English sovereign to have a Private Secretary? That is a question which few would like to be called upon to answer. Long ago the king begat a family of secretaries which, as it were, grew up and left him; for those august parliamentary persons, the Secretaries of State, were in origin only secretaries with a small s. Now they have developed an independent position in the Cabinet, which has a secretariat of its own. The earliest ancestor of the present Private Secretary seems to have been Sir Herbert Taylor, secretary to the blind and mad king George III. George IV wanted to have a Private Secretary too, but Parliament would not allow him one, so he got the work done by someone else under a different designation. William IV recalled Taylor, and Victoria asked his advice at her accession. Taylor must have been an old man by this time and ready to talk like a father. 'Is Your Majesty afraid of work?' he asked. 'No', came the answer. 'Then', said Sir Herbert, 'don't have a Private Secretary'. It was absurd advice, impossible of fulfilment. For the first four years of the reign the Prime Minister himself, Lord Melbourne, was guide, philosopher and friend, favourite uncle and private secretary all rolled into one. He gave place to the indefatigable Albert, and when the Prince Consort died, the widow took over the staff he had trained in his own habits of laborious precision, chief among them Sir Charles Phipps and General Grey. Neither of these enjoyed the title of Private Secretary and both were dead within nine years of their master. The first *real* Private Secretary was that wonderful man Sir Henry Ponsonby, who held the post from 1870 to 1895, and he was succeeded by Arthur Bigge, his assistant, who as Lord Stamfordham continued to hold office as Private Secretary to King George V until 1931.

Mr. Emden opens his book with an essay on Baron Stockmar, the Coburg doctor who from behind the scenes exercised so great an influence on our Royal House; for Stockmar fashioned Albert, and Albert fashioned Victoria. Then follow studies of Albert's secretaries, and Victoria's. Next we turn to the private secretaries of Prime Ministers, more particularly Monty Corry, Lord Rowton, the private secretary of Disraeli; and finally, a group of people who were not private secretaries at all—the group of financiers and sportsmen, mainly Jewish, who were the principal friends of Edward VII.

Mr. Emden has undertaken an interesting though by no means an easy subject, for it is part of the duty of a private secretary to escape attention and to conceal his own personality behind that of his master or mistress. Some of Mr. Emden's figures remain shadowy, but others emerge, and his sketch of the greatest of the private secretaries, Sir Henry Ponsonby, is a valuable addition to one's picture of the Victorian establishment.

**The Influence of English.** By M. Follick  
Williams and Norgate. 6s.

The author of this entertaining book holds the view that our language, if its spelling were reformed, would very soon become a universal language, with startling results. 'The overworked city clerk could be as sure of gaining a living in London as in Berne, in Rome as in Athens, without having to overwork himself still more in learning another language. Surplus men of all trades in any country could look for work in other countries where they were wanted. Welsh coal miners not content with the existing conditions of labour in Wales could try the Siberian coal fields'. The thesis of the book is a sensible one, and one that can be argued soberly. It is true that there *are* people who regard any attempt to reform our spelling as an assault upon the integrity of our language, and a violation of those holy places so zealously guarded by pedants, amateur philologists and compositors. But reform is more in the air nowadays than it was when this book was written, twenty years ago. Possibly

the author would have been well advised to rewrite it in the light of recent research. He might then have defended his thesis more soberly, and resisted the temptation to lay about him in all directions with the big stick. Zeal is an indifferent substitute for scholarship, and spelling reform has long passed beyond the stage when it can be handled intelligently by the zealous amateur. The author's proposed scheme of reformed spelling will not bear close inspection, and it is unwise to say that once this system has been learnt any foreigner could read it 'with exactly the same pronunciation as the most cultured Englishman', after an hour's study of the reformed alphabet. Any language teacher equipped with modern scientific technique in the teaching of phonetics knows that such a statement is mere nonsense. The author's zeal frequently betrays him into making exaggerated statements, and his unfamiliarity with the technical vocabulary of modern linguistic study makes it difficult at times to understand him.

In addition to simplified spelling, there is suggested a simplified grammar of the pidgin kind, designed to remove such irregularities as exist in English grammatical forms.

**The Great Depression.** By Lionel Robbins  
Macmillan. 8s. 6d.

Professor Robbins has in the book before us produced a most stimulating and interesting work. It is written with lucidity and considerable literary power; he has been actuated by a passionate enthusiasm, which keeps his pages alive and impels attention. The burden of his tale is that the world is suffering from an excess of government interference in economic matters and from the prevalence of erroneous ideas with regard to monetary regulation. He supposes that the conditions for permanent recovery and stability are the severe delimitation of government activity, the restoration of flexibility in the economic system and the acceptance of what he regards as sound ideas about money.

His views on money are of central importance for his argument, for he supposes the present depression to be largely due to the prevalence of mistaken notions in that field, leading to severe inflation before 1929. In his preface he claims to be an apostle of 'orthodoxy' and to be interpreting 'the heritage of generations of subtle and disinterested thought'. It is only fair to give the general reader a warning on this point. Professor Robbins is undoubtedly well acquainted with the thought of the great succession of economists in the past. In recent times their skeleton of thought has been developed and articulated by a number of writers, including those whom Professor Robbins criticises. There is nothing in the essential nature of Professor Robbins' point of view which gives him grounds for claiming to be in the true line of succession, or to represent present-day orthodoxy. His monetary doctrines are largely based on the recent work of Professor Hayek. In his own exposition there is not that close tackling of fundamentals which a vindication of his principles requires. This whole line of thought has been subject to severe criticism at every point. Those who are not convinced that the criticisms are conclusive must at least admit that the whole matter rests in doubt. Unfortunately it is on this doubtful foundation that the more 'persuasive' parts of Professor Robbins' discussion rest.

To his general reasoning he adds some statistical evidence—his handling of figures is a little too eclectic to inspire confidence—that there was considerable inflation in the gold-using world before 1929. On the definition of inflation required by his own theoretical basis it is easy to prove severe inflation; but if that basis be rejected, he does not appear to establish anything more than signs of a moderate inflation in the U.S. between 1927 and 1929—too small a matter to account for the disasters which have followed. It is true that he thinks there were other causes, post-War difficulties, and a number of tendencies which may be summarily described by the expression 'reckless finance'. But these tendencies too he regards as resulting from the monetary inflation.

Now it is possible to take quite a different point of view, to hold that monetary policy was no more expansionary than was required by the general economic advance, to hold even that monetary policy was on balance repressive, and that a still more repressive policy would either have obstructed normal progress, or, making no difference to that, would have failed to avert the

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following slump. Further, it may be held that the phenomena connected with reckless finance, which Professor Robbins describes in an interesting way, inevitably arise in a world reaching our present phase of prosperity, with a high level of savings, a very low 'natural' rate of interest and approaching a satiety of fixed capital equipment—to name but one of the problems which arise at our present level of material well-being.

If this view be right, a difficulty arises which the forces of individualist economy are powerless to overcome. There is a problem of planning. Now, in tilting at current attempts at planning and restrictions and obstructions, Professor Robbins is at his most brilliant and convincing. His words should be carefully pondered by the responsible authorities. But, on this view, the final verdict on Professor Robbins is that he is purely destructive. He sees clearly the folly of much that has been perpetrated. But on the constructive side he has only a more repressive monetary system and greater flexibility in our economic structure to offer. To suppose that all would proceed smoothly on these conditions is far too placid.

Professor Robbins urges the claims of Reason with moving eloquence. All economists must join him there. If only he appreciated that there is a problem, his attacks on spurious and muddle-headed recipes would be far more convincing. If only he could rid himself of fallacious monetary obsessions, no one would be more fitted to devise and advocate reasonable courses.

**Design in Modern Life.** Edited by John Gloag  
Allen and Unwin. 10s. 6d.

This is one of the many books of recent years which have grown out of broadcast talks. The series on Design proved one of the most popular of recent years and showed that interest in the subject was extensive and that nothing short of a revolution in thought is taking place within our time. The publishers were therefore well advised to collect the material and remodel it in more permanent and suitable form. The 'discussions' have been reduced to essays, by Robert Atkinson, Elizabeth Denby, E. Maxwell Fry, James Laver, Frank Pick, A. B. Read and Gordon Russell, and they are now copiously illustrated. One must admit that these illustrations with their captions form a rather strong counter-attraction to the essays, and it would perhaps be as well if readers took their fill of them first and then read the essays without fear of distraction. All of them are worth careful reading and meditation. We would particularly commend Maxwell Fry's opening chapter on 'The Dwelling' for its sense of history and clarity. The feature which distinguishes the book as a whole and makes it particularly suitable for educational purposes is the maturity and common-sense which informs every contribution. The writers are men and women who know their job and have no temptation to be superior about it. They see things in proportion. It is decidedly encouraging to find our leaders in design so well grounded in its philosophy. To quote from Frank Pick's concluding essay, 'Fitness for purpose must transcend the merely practical and serve the moral and spiritual order as well. There is a moral and spiritual fitness to be satisfied'.

A word must be said in praise of the large charts which are folded in at the end of the volume. They are designed by Raymond McGrath, the architect, and illustrate in neat outline drawings the evolution of thirty everyday objects from 1500 (or the time of invention) to the present day. The execution is admirable and schools should procure them at once.

**The History of Spain.** By Louis Bertrand and Sir Charles Petrie. Eyre and Spottiswoode. 18s.

If there are people who believe that the Arab occupation of Spain was a period of continuous peace, sceptical enlightenment and uniform blessing and that these Eastern people were expelled from Europe by a nation of barbarous fanatics; if the view is anywhere held that the downfall of Spain was due to this expulsion, the wickedness of the Inquisition and the righteousness of Protestant England, and that the decadence was a just retribution for past arrogance and superstition, then M. Louis Bertrand and Sir Charles Petrie will have done some service in correcting these fantastic errors. The book covers Spanish history from the Arab Conquest to the present day. The first part, dealing with the Arab domination, is by far the more interesting and more controversial. Here it is held that, on the whole, the Arab occupation of the Peninsular was a calamity for Spain, that the continual state of ferocious civil war in which the Arab and Berber leaders lived was ruinous to prosperity, and fatal in its influence on national character and development. Most of the achievements claimed for the Arabs

were, according to M. Bertrand, the work of Spaniards upon whom the Arabs lived materially and spiritually as parasites.

Those who take their history more coolly will detect the inexactitudes and excesses of M. Bertrand's view. He admits, though reluctantly, the Arab achievements, and his main effect is, to put it more fairly, to confuse rather than to distort. His major point is sound enough: that for centuries the Spaniards were haunted by Moorish influences and fear of a further Islamic invasion. This point is really more important than his deflation of the Arab claims. After an excellent account of the greatness Spain attained after the Reconquest and an exposition of the real reasons of the decline—the exhaustion of colonising and of wars in Europe, the rise of trade barriers, the influx of gold and the undue respect in which it was held—the second part of the book records rapidly, with Sir Charles Petrie's assistance, the main events from the death of Philip II to the present day. The authors are critical of the liberalism of Charles III, being of the opinion that he fatally weakened the monarchy by separating it from the Church, are more tolerant than is usual of Fernando VII, and incline to the view that in rejecting Carlism the Spaniards completed the evils Charles III had begun. Thus the general bias of the book is conservative. Unhappily, however, the vivid controversial methods of M. Bertrand's earlier manner have here degenerated and there is no clear picture of the clash of ideas which was hidden under the clash of personalities in this modern period. In fact the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are treated summarily as not much more than a string of history book events. The whole *raison d'être* of the liberal movement is obscured and readers who hope to be enlightened about the forces which ultimately overthrew Alfonso XIII will be as much in the dark as they were when they first read of the event in their newspaper. Dynasties are not overthrown merely because their opponents are naughty boys. Spanish history abounds with chances for the partisan and if a balanced picture is difficult to get, there is room for a good conservative, Catholic, Monarchic exposition. But the hopes raised at the beginning of this book are disappointed.

**Rogues Walk Here.** By William Roughead  
Cassell. 10s. 6d.

It is now eight-and-twenty years since the learned Mr. Roughead first set his hand to the plough and began driving his furrows across the criminous field. These furrows have not been altogether solitary: behind him have come, of course, the admiring *cognoscenti* of crime—disinterested and fascinated witnesses—but also, alas, certain less estimable followers whose attentiveness to his toil was clearly inspired by an *animus furandi*. The pilferers and plagiarists, however, have merely emphasised Mr. Roughead's absolute mastery of his genre—his gift for marshalling the essential and some decorative facts, for presenting them in a logical order and yet keeping one or two up his sleeve for a pleasant or an ugly surprise, his even, dispassionate tone, his precision and allusiveness, and above all, his ironic humour, over and over again so sharp-edged that the blade is beneath the skin before one knows the cut is made. No-one else in the field can do just what Mr. Roughead does. A *petit-maitre* he may be, but a *maitre*.

*Rogues Walk Here* is the ninth volume of essays in crime and juridical curiosity from the author's pen. Villainy does not keep pace with him—not, at any rate, the villainy of the requisite standard—and two or three of the papers in this collection deal with cases of minor quality. But this is amply atoned for by the outstanding subjects. For here is a perfect re-telling of the famous Ardlamont case of the 'nineties, when the enigmatic, but well-connected, Mr. Monson was set free by a Not Proven verdict, on the charge of murdering the rich young Cecil Hamborough when shooting rabbits in an Argyllshire wood. Who is there (unless the mysterious visitant from Pimlico still survive) who can lay his hand upon his heart and say, 'I know for sure that Monson was guilty'? Again, the lurid story of Sawney Bean, the Monster of Ballantrae, and his cannibal family, was well worth cool examination, albeit Mr. Roughead seems to be echoing De Quincey in another connection and cries '*Non est inventus*': for he decides that, after all, there is no evidence that the great Sawney has ever been. To crown all, Mr. Roughead offers a wry little extravaganza in 'Mrs. Mackinnon at Home', which, if its full value depends on a fairly close knowledge of his various works of interpretation and editing, will remind the reader, lulled by the smooth precision of the Roughead style, that here is not merely a skilled researcher, but a very dexterous writer.

## New Novels

Rhondda Roundabout. By Jack Jones. Faber. 7s. 6d.

In This Valley. By Michael Home. Rich and Cowan. 7s. 6d.

The Cat Jumps, and Other Stories. By Elizabeth Bowen. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

Reviewed by EDWIN MUIR

THE books in this list make very easy reading indeed; the first two because of the extraordinarily simple picture of life that they present, and the third because of the sheer vivacity of the writing. Half-asleep, one could read Mr. Jones and Mr. Home without ever needing to waken; but Miss Bowen stings us into alertness, we actually begin to listen to her voice with its pleasant hint of the brogue, and then to note what she says. It is not that she addresses herself more seriously to us than Mr. Jones or Mr. Home, for both are perfectly serious writers. But they content themselves with telling us things that have often been told before: such as that, everything considered, the Rhondda is quite a human region, or that the heart of the English countryside is in the right place, or that miners and farmers have their natural feelings like everybody else, or, in general, that though things are not what they should be they might very easily be worse. Such novels create an illusion in the half-awake mind that an illusion is being created. They always bring in, so as to do this, the great universals with which imaginative literature is also concerned: telling us that human beings are born, often fall in love, and invariably die. But they tell us nothing about birth or love or death which one could not gather from a conversation in a pub after everybody had reached the benevolent stage; and if one is patient enough to submit to their spell, they indeed automatically produce somewhat the same vaguely mollifying effect as a few pints of beer drunk in leisurely and friendly company. The world feels a better place.

The theme of such novels matters little; it may be what is generally called unpleasant (a mild adjective which for some reason has acquired a terrific power of sinister suggestion when applied to works of fiction): it is the treatment that counts. So the fact that Mr. Jones has chosen as his scene one of the most badly stricken districts in Great Britain does not affect in the least the character of his book, which belongs to the benevolently sentimental class. He does not make us feel that the existence endured by the unemployed of such areas as the Rhondda is unnatural, degrading, pitiable, and ultimately dangerous; instead he solicits our admiration for men's capacity to adapt themselves to almost any set of circumstances, and he ends by capitulating to something which is very like local patriotism. There is, indeed, a division in the book. One feels that Mr. Jones set out to expose an evil, but that as he went on the wish grew stronger and stronger to reassure his readers. He certainly gives a vivid picture of daily working-class life in a Welsh mining town, with its Nonconformist chapels, its working men's halls, its ex-Service men's clubs, its choirs, dramatic societies, trade union and Communist demonstrations, boxing contests, and pit disasters; but all is so uniformly coloured with an unobtrusive sentimentality that the picture is almost without meaning. A short article by Mr. H. W. Jones, an unemployed man, which appeared recently in *Life and Letters*, gives one a far more real idea of what it means to be unemployed than this comprehensive panorama of Rhondda life. And so, although the book deals with one of the most dreadful industrial areas in the country, it can almost be called pleasant and comfortable reading.

But though as an exposure of the state of the Rhondda the book is ineffective, as a story it has many of the merits of a best-seller, and some which do not generally belong to that class. The main figure is a Nonconformist minister, a charming, simple and single-minded young man who strives to find some solution for the problems of the Rhondda which transcends those offered by the various political parties. This character is credible as a human being, and is also a convenient figure for incarnating the author's disillusionment with politics; but when he finds himself involved in an inward conflict between his love for a shop-girl and his religious ideals, he becomes highly unconvincing and absurd. As soon as Mr. Jones leaves the level of ordinary gregarious human feeling he has nothing to support him but conventional sentiment. Accordingly, the best portrait in the book is that of Shoni, the young minister's uncle, who is

the perfect ordinary man. He is extremely well drawn. The Labourites and Communists are also convincing enough; in his portrait of the latter the author shows a little malice, it is true; but the caricature is a good one. Mr. Jones' most evident gift is one for rough and ready characterisation, mostly achieved by means of vigorous dialogue. When they are talking his characters are generally real; but when they are having silent conflicts in their souls they are unbelievable. It is a feast of Rhondda talk that the author has given us, and a description of Rhondda public functions: in other words, a façade, which is bound to be more reassuring than the reality. The young minister marries his shop-girl at the end, which is also reassuring.

*In This Valley* is Mr. Home's second novel, and his first one received an unusually cordial reception from the press, being called, among other things, 'one of the best novels of family life ever written'. *In This Valley* does not justify such high praise. The author is obviously familiar with farm life, and can describe it with a gratifying competence; but in reading him, as in reading Mr. Jones, one is teased by the feeling that one is being given an imitation of an illusion. The observation is not intimate enough to bring the characters before us; they are too plain and general; like the rough outlines of figures where the essential distinguishing strokes have never been filled in. These partly articulated figures experience the great universal emotions, such as love, hate, loss, thirst for power, renunciation, and so forth; but they experience hardly anything else: in short, one can catalogue their feelings. There is an old farmer, a just, taciturn, somewhat unbending and sincerely religious man who, although conceived on these terms, is not unimpressive, since he has come to the age when character hardens into one piece. The story is mainly about his son, whose heart is divided between two things: revenge on a proud landowner for unjustly driving his father and himself out of their farm and love for a wanton whose only wish is to amuse herself at his expense. These two passions almost drive him to madness and murder; but that peril is averted, and finally he resigns himself to existence as he finds it. The great fault of the book lies in the excessive simplification of the characters. They have little more than a paper reality.

Miss Bowen, in her very interesting volume of short stories, never creates the illusion that she is creating an illusion, and such being the case, she sometimes has to run the risk of not creating an illusion at all. It is a risk which is only run, however, by writers who deal immediately with experience, and do not cast their eyes for guidance on extant authentic copies. She has an original mind, and a keen and flashing rather than a patient and receptive sensibility. She is best when she is treating a witty or a morbid theme; for her imagination is quick and impatient, and proceeds by abrupt leaps, so that it works best on a subject which contains some surprise, amusing or horrible. The same impatience is shown, very happily, in her style, which is full of delightful short-cuts and unexpected compressions. A great number of the stories deal with Irish life and with childhood, and these are the most uniformly good. But probably the most effective of the lot is the title story, which tells what happens to a party of enlightened and superior people when they decide to spend a week-end in a Thames bungalow, where a horrible murder had once taken place. It is both witty and gruesome; but Miss Bowen somewhat spoils the effect by visibly working up the horror. That is her main fault in this vein, and it makes 'The Apple Tree', another gruesome story, dealing with possession, completely ineffective. The longest and most ambitious story, 'The Disinherited', shows her imagination at its best in an extract from a letter which a murderer writes night after night to ease his need for confession, and then burns; but it is so much better than the rest that the effect is disproportionate. Nevertheless, this is a remarkable volume of short stories, and well worth reading.

Mr. Muir also recommends *The Coward*, by Anne Meredith (Gollancz, 7s. 6d.).